



Stories for Children Magazine™

October 2008 Volume 2 Issue 7



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Come Take an Adventure in the World of Ink!
StoriesforChildrenMagazine.org

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Stories for Children Magazine
October 2008 Volume 2 Issue 7

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Designed for use in the classroom.

Monthly back issues available at:
<http://storiesforchildrenmagazine.org>



Would you like to write for us?

Stories for Children Magazine publishes short stories, articles, poems, coloring pages, word and picture puzzles, book reviews, arts & crafts, and interviews with Children's Book Authors and/or Illustrators for children ages 3 to 12. For more information visit <http://storiesforchildrenmagazine.org>

Come Take an Adventure in the World of Ink.

Welcome to Stories for Children Magazine for kids ages 3 to 12 years



From The Editor:

Someone once said we should learn something new every day. Whether it's information about someone or something, a new song or a new game, or maybe a new word...learning new things exercises our brains.

Just as healthy eating and exercise keep our bodies strong, knowledge keeps our minds strong. The more we learn, the stronger it gets.

As the Nonfiction Editor here at Stories for Children Magazine, my mind gets a workout on a daily basis. Thanks to all the talented authors who submit their articles, puzzles, recipes, games and crafts to our magazine, I get to learn something new every day.

That's because Nonfiction is writing that is true. It's filled with facts about people, places, or things. Writing nonfiction is hard work. Writers must do a lot of research. Once they pick out a subject, they have to read books, magazines, search the internet...anywhere they can find information. But most important...writers must make sure all the information they write down is actual fact.

That is why I look forward to checking my Inbox every day. I can't wait to see what new and interesting thing I will learn. Will it be an article about a weird bug? Strange plant? Special holiday? Interesting people?

What interests you? Do you have an unusual pet? Have you visited some wonderful place on a holiday? Are you an expert at a certain craft? Maybe there's a game you play that our readers might not know.

Hmmm. I better check my Inbox. Maybe I'll see your name in there!

Happy writing!

Wendy Dickson
Nonfiction Editor

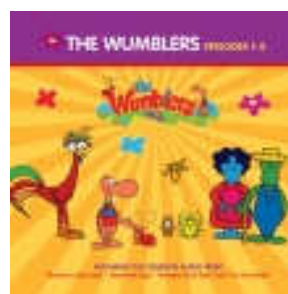
FEATURES:

- | | |
|---|--------|
| <i>Animal Crackers</i> (3-6)
By: Lisa Lowe Stauffer | Pg. 4 |
| <i>A Painting for Jingo!</i> (3-6)
By: Roy Kindelberger | Pg. 6 |
| <i>Marissa's Brave Bones</i> (7-9)
By: Marilyn Kratz | Pg. 7 |
| <i>Possums for a Pet?</i> (3-6)
By: Glenys Eskdale | Pg. 9 |
| <i>A Halloween Surprise</i> (3-6)
By: Mary Jo Shannon | Pg. 10 |
| <i>Bandaging Boo-Boos</i> (7-9)
By: Ellen Javernick | Pg. 11 |
| <i>Trudy Tott Tattletale</i> (3-6)
By: Sandie Lee | Pg. 12 |
| <i>Two Heads are Better than One</i> (7-9)
By: Valerie Bendt | Pg. 14 |
| <i>Acro-BATS</i> (7-9)
By: Liana Mahoney | Pg. 18 |
| <i>Full Moon</i> (7-9)
By: Billy Burgess | Pg. 22 |
| <i>Don't Break Your Mother's Back!</i> (3-6)
By: Gayle Jacobson-Huset | Pg. 24 |
| <i>Ruth Wakefield's Cookie</i> (7-9)
By: Carla Mooney | Pg. 25 |
| <i>Pumpkin Party</i> (10-12)
By: Allyn Riggs | Pg. 28 |
| <i>Don't Run, Don't Hide</i> (7-9)
By: Lyn Sirota | Pg. 31 |
| <i>Hocus Pocus</i> (7-9)
By: Bonnie MacKay | Pg. 32 |
| <i>Drawings on the Earth</i> (10-12)
By: Donna Marie West | Pg. 34 |
| <i>Jed & Randy</i> (10-12)
By: Kathleen E. Fearing | Pg. 36 |
| <i>Tempting Fate</i> (10-12)
By: Gilda A. Herrera | Pg. 38 |
| <i>Scared Stiff</i> (10-12)
By: Virginia C. Ferguson | Pg. 40 |
| <i>A Sister's Determination</i> (10-12)
By: Judy Doyle | Pg. 42 |
| <i>Look Out! That Bug's Loaded</i> (10-12)
By: Sandie Lee | Pg. 44 |

Featured Guest:



In this issue meet
the Wumblers TV Show Creator
Laura Wellington
Pg. 20



DEPARTMENTS:

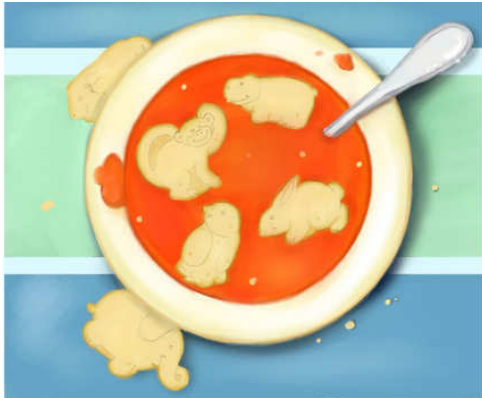
- | | |
|---|--------|
| Youth Submission:
<i>Roman Farming</i>
By: Aniket Shah, 5th grader | Pg. 26 |
| Coloring Page | Pg. 19 |
| Poems | |
| Puzzles | |
| Arts & Crafts | |

Animal Crackers

By: Lisa Lowe Stauffer

More than one hundred years ago, bakers in England began selling cookies shaped like animals. These were so popular, bakers in America started making them, too. Some of the early animal cookies were called "Zoologicals." Now we call these cookies animal crackers.

Some animal crackers are sold in large boxes or plastic jars, but one brand, Barnum's Animal Crackers, comes in a small box shaped like a circus train car. When they were first sold in 1902, a string was put on each box so it could be hung up as a Christmas tree decoration. Even though most people today don't hang up the boxes, the string is still there.



There's even a song about animal crackers. It was first sung in 1935 by then seven-year-old actress, Shirley Temple.

"Animal crackers in my soup
Monkeys and rabbits loop the loop.
Gosh, oh gee, but I have fun
swallowin' animals one by one."

If you want to try making animal crackers at home, you'll need some animal-shaped cookie cutters and an adult to help. Here are two recipes. One is a little sweet, like the animal crackers you can buy in stores. And the other is not sweet, in case you want to be like Shirley Temple and eat animal crackers in your soup. 🍲

Take a Guess

By: Anjali Amit

What will help move me to and fro
And get me where I want to go?
Can you guess? Oh do you know?
Here's the answer, read it slow.

It has no key, it has no motor,
No heat, no cold, not even a rotor.
No gears, no seat, no windows, no doors
No fluid, no oil, no roof, no floors.

It comes as a pair and look like pegs;
It is otherwise known as....your legs!

Animal Crackers Recipe

(not sweet)

Time: 10 minutes to make, 20 minutes to bake.

Makes about 36 small (1") crackers

What You Need:

½ cup flour
1/8 teaspoon baking powder
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon sugar
3 Tablespoons plus 2 teaspoons milk

Instructions as easy as 1-2-3:

Get out a cookie sheet and some small cookie cutters. Do not grease the cookie sheet.

Mix together the flour, baking powder, salt, and sugar.

Add the milk, mixing well. Knead in the bowl a few times, adding a little flour if needed, before turning dough out onto a floured board.

Roll out the dough to no more than 1/8-inch thickness (the thinner the better, but it still needs to be thick enough to use a cookie cutter). Cut shapes and transfer to the cookie sheet.

Bake at 300 degrees for 10 minutes, flip the cookies over, then bake another 10 minutes until they just start to brown. (If you have rolled them out very thin they'll cook faster.) Let cool on a wire rack. They will be very crisp.

Animal Crackers Recipe

(slightly sweet)

Time: 10 minutes to make, 20 minutes to bake.

Makes about 36 small (1") cookies

What You Need:

½ cup flour
1/8 teaspoon baking powder
1/8 teaspoon salt
2 teaspoons butter
1 Tablespoon plus 2 teaspoons sugar
½ teaspoon lemon extract
1/4 teaspoon vanilla
2 Tablespoons milk

Instructions as easy as 1-2-3:

Get out a cookie sheet and some small cookie cutters. Do not grease the cookie sheet.

Mix together the flour, baking powder, and salt. Set aside.

In a medium bowl, cream the butter and sugar (mash together with the back of a spoon) until well blended. Add the lemon extract and the vanilla. Mix well.

Add the flour mixture alternately with the milk.

Turn out the dough onto a floured board. If it's too sticky, knead a little flour into it so you can roll it out.

Roll out the dough to no more than 1/8-inch thickness. Cut shapes and transfer to the cookie sheet.

Bake at 300 degrees for 10 minutes, flip the cookies over, then bake another 10-15 minutes until they just start to brown. Let cool on a wire rack. They should be crunchy.

Ages: 3-6

A Painting for Jingo!

By: Roy Kindelberger

Mommy pulled the car into the driveway and opened Penny's door.

"What in the world is this?" Mommy held up a half eaten sandwich.

"Not me!" Penny's opened lunchbox dangled from her backpack. "Jingo did it." She skipped toward the house.

"Jingo, I'm home!" Penny ran and grabbed her rubber ball. She threw it toward Jingo. The ball bounced high in the air and into the other room.

"Ahhhh, I'm doing my homework. Who threw this ball?" shouted Penny's brother.

"Not me!" Penny picked up her paints and some paper. "Jingo did it."

Penny was painting a picture of Jingo and herself. She ran to the sink to change her paint water. Penny took the cup and turned around, only she had forgotten to push in her chair. Penny fell over the chair and knocked over her paint. Water flew through the air, and paint flowed onto the floor.

Penny's sister came into the kitchen. "Now what did you do? When Mom gets off the phone you're in trouble!"

"Not me!" Penny pulled herself off the chair and brushed off her dress. "Jingo did it."

"Well, Jingo better help you pick this mess up, or else." Penny's sister crossed her arms and stomped out of the room.

Penny had an idea. She put on her headband. Penny picked up the chair. She ran to the broom closet.

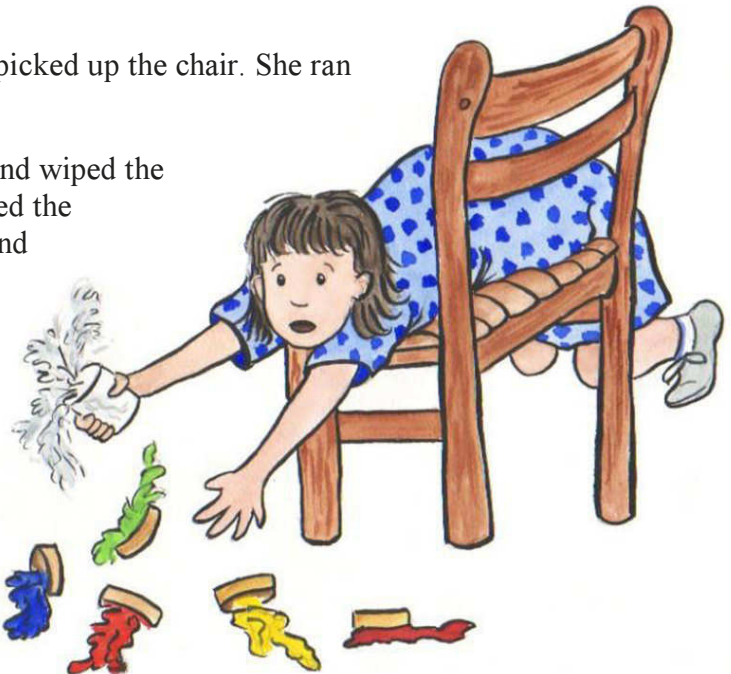
"Jingo, quick, help!" Penny and Jingo wet the mop and wiped the floor back and forth. They rinsed the mop and grabbed the dust rag. Penny and Jingo started wiping the tables and counters.

Penny's mom and sister came into the kitchen. Mom threw her hands into the air. "Wow, this room is clean! Penny, I see you've been working so hard."

Penny's sister put her hands over her face and shook her head. "Unbelievable!"

"Thanks, Mom!" Penny and Jingo started to wipe off the stove. She looked at her sister.

"Hey, this stove is a mess, someone needs to clean this more."



~The End~

Marissa's Brave Bones

Ages: 7-9

By: Marilyn Kratz

"I have a problem, Mom." Marissa tossed her backpack onto the car seat and buckled herself in.

"What kind of problem, hon?" Mom asked.

"Mrs. Benson wants me to be Ma Ingalls in our class play. It's a big part. What if I goof and ruin the play?"

"You'll do fine," Mom insisted. "I have confidence in you."

"I wish I did." Marissa's stomach churned at the thought of being on the stage in the school gym. "Maybe I'll ask Mrs. Benson if I may play the part of Carrie. She doesn't have many lines."

"I think you need to accept the challenge Mrs. Benson gave you," Mom said. "I'll help you practice."

Marissa sighed. *Why am I always such a scaredy-cat*, she wondered.

"How'd you like to stay at Grandma's while I pick up a few groceries?" Mom asked. "She might be able to help you with your costume."

Marissa told Grandma about the play as they had a snack in the kitchen. "I'm really scared about being in the play, Grandma," she admitted. "Were you ever scared to try new things when you were a girl?"

"Of course," Grandma said. "But you'll get over it as soon as you find your brave bones."

Marissa giggled. "Maybe all my bones are cowards."

"Brave bones run in our family," Grandma said. "Sometimes you find yours by doing just one brave act. Now, come on. I have the perfect skirt for you to use in the play."



"It's probably one I wore when I used to play dress-up here," said Marissa, following Grandma up the stairs.

"No, you've not seen this one," said Grandma, opening the door to her guest bedroom. "I've kept it folded away because it's so special. It's time it was put to use again."

Grandma went to the dresser and took out a package wrapped in tissue paper. She lifted out a long fawn-brown skirt with a wide black velvet band at the hem.

"My great-grandmother brought this skirt with her when she came to America over a hundred years ago," Grandma said. "She wasn't much older than you at the time."

"It's beautiful," Marissa whispered, trying to picture the girl who first wore it. "What was her name?"

“Fredricka,” Grandma replied. “I was only ten when she died, but I remember the stories she told me. She and Great-grandpa carved a farm out of the prairie sod. Often they went hungry so their children could eat. She wore this skirt only for special occasions like going to church and quilting socials. I’ll be so proud to see you wearing it in the play.”

Marissa ran her hand lightly over the soft, weathered fabric, wishing some of Fredricka's courage would rub off on her.

“What if I ruin it?” she asked, her stomach churning again.

“I know you’ll take good care of it,” Grandma said. “I have confidence in you.” She helped Marissa pull the skirt over her jeans. “A bit too wide at the waist. I’ll see if I can find a belt in my closet to hold it up.”

While Marissa waited for Grandma to return, she walked carefully to the mirror. She stared at her reflection. *I’m beginning to feel like Ma Ingalls*, she thought. She took one step back to get a better look and heard a soft ripping sound.

“Oh, no,” she moaned. She stared at the black velvet band torn away from the hem where she had accidentally stepped on it. Quickly she slipped out of the skirt, her heart pounding.

How can I ever tell Grandma, she wondered, fighting back tears. She tried to fold the skirt so the rip wouldn’t show. Then she heard Grandma coming back down the hall. Marissa looked down at the skirt and thought about her brave ancestor. Then she knew what she must do. She took a deep breath as Grandma came into the room carrying a fistful of belts.

“Grandma,” she began. “I’m so sorry. It was an accident. I’ll fix it, I promise.” She held out the skirt, showing Grandma the rip. Grandma looked at it for a moment. Then a slow smile spread over her face. She wrapped her arms around Marissa.

“Well, my love,” she said. “I’d say you just found your first brave bone.”

Marissa looked up at Grandma. A feeling of relief washed away the fear she had felt just a moment before.

“I guess brave bones do run in the family,” Marissa said. “I’ll remember that when I’m wearing this skirt to play the part of Ma Ingalls. She had a lot of brave bones, too.”

~The End~

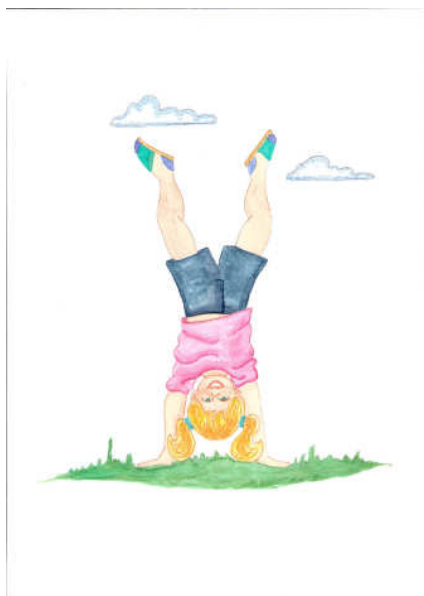
Handstand Upside Down

By: Katina VanCronkhite

My toes dance in clouds,
my nose whiffs the ground,
my legs wave like flags,
my hair swirls around
in my handstand, upside down world.

The sun’s at my feet,
the ground’s at my head.
I frighten a bug
asleep in his bed
in my handstand, upside down world.

I giggle and start
to wobble and sway.
I crash to the earth!
Oh, why can’t I stay
in my handstand, upside down world?



Possums for a Pet?

By: Glenys Eskdale

Amy does not have a pet cat or dog, or even a pet bird. But she does have possums in her garden.

Every evening Amy puts a dish of fruit, vegetables, and bread scraps outside the back door. She sits quietly on the steps in the dark and waits for the possums to come.

One, two, three possums come up and sniff the plate. They nibble and munch, holding the food in their front paws. Amy laughs as they squabble over the last apple core.

Australian brush tail possums are the same size as a cat. They are gray with a bushy black tail. A newborn possum is the size of a peanut. It lives in its mother's pouch until it grows big enough to ride on her back. When fully grown, it has to find a home of its own.

In the forest, possums sleep all day in hollow logs or holes in trees. They feed at night, clinging to branches with their strong, sharp claws. Leaves, flowers, fruit, and sometimes grass are all good food for possums.

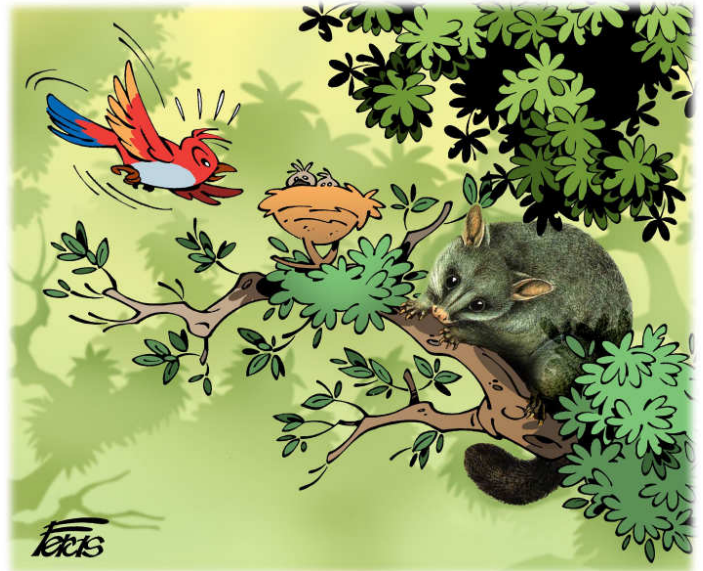
Lots of people in Australia have wild possums living in their yards. Garden plants are just as tasty as the wild plants in the forest. The dark insides of house walls make a safe, warm places to sleep.

The possums at Amy's house made a smelly mess in the walls and chewed holes in the ceiling. Amy's dad wanted to trap them and take them into the bush, but that's not allowed. Possums are territorial. The bush possums would fight and kill the newcomers. Since possums are protected native animals, people have to learn how to live with them.

So Amy's dad built three wooden boxes with possum-sized holes in the front. Amy lined the bottom of each box with enough wood shavings to make a soft nest. Dad attached the possum houses to the trunks of three tall trees.

When the possums came out that night to feed, Dad blocked up the hole in the wall so they couldn't go back. It didn't take long for the possums to find their new homes and settle in.

Sometimes in the dark when Amy is in bed she hears raspy breathing sounds outside her bedroom window. She burrows under the blankets. Ghosts? No. It's just the possums in the apple tree outside her window. 🦨



A Halloween Surprise

By: Mary Jo Shannon



dug a



in the garden



.

He put three



in the



and covered them.

The



came and wet the



.

The



warmed the



Soon a green leaf pushed through the



. Two more leaves,

and a long green



appeared.



saw a yellow flower on the



The flower dropped off the



and a tiny green ball appeared. It grew

bigger and bigger. The big green ball turned



, then



He picked his



. Father cut the



and scraped out

the



. He carved a face on the



and put a



inside. A



and



for next year!

Rebus Key

Dan



Soil



Rain



Stem



Orange



Flashlight



Hole



Seeds



Sun



Yellow



Pumpkin



Jack-o'-Lantern



Bandaging Boo-Boos

Ages: 7-9

By: Ellen Javernick

Even cave moms must have kissed their little ones' boo-boos, but what did they do for bigger, bloodier cuts?



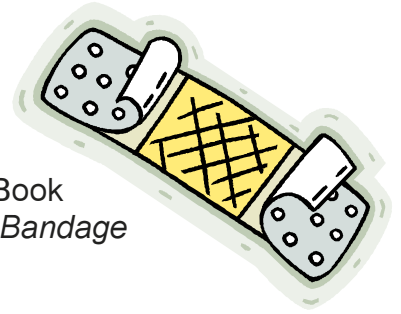
Long before there were adhesive bandages, people pushed down on wounds with their bare hands or burned the injured area to stop the bleeding. Ancient Egyptians covered cuts with a mixture of lint, animal

grease, and honey. Later medical caregivers packed injuries with sawdust or covered them with "plasters" made of heated plant sap and animal fat. People even wound long, long strips of cotton around cuts to stop the bleeding. These bandages were washed and reused. They had to be rolled by hand. During wartime, the women back home rolled lots and lots of bandages.

Shortly after World War I, a man named Earle Dickson came up with the idea for the first adhesive bandage. He got tired of bandaging up his wife, who always seemed to be getting cut or burned. He lay out a strip of sticky surgical tape 18" long and stuck small wads of soft gauze along it. Then all he had to do was cut off a length of tape each time his wife got hurt. He shared his great idea with his employers, the Johnson brothers. They thought his bandage a bit hard to manage, but soon the Johnson and Johnson Company began marketing short, single-use Band-Aids that could be stuck over cuts.

Sales of Band-Aids got off to a slow start until some salesmen gave them to Boy Scout troops as a publicity stunt. Johnson and

Johnson also came up with another clever way to popularize their product. They included two Band-Aids in each copy of a Little Golden Book called *Doctor Dan, The Bandage Man*.



Since then, bandage companies have made many improvements in their products. Adhesive bandages no longer look plain. Some are "invisible," while others are brightly decorated with cartoon characters. Fewer injuries need stitches because of the invention of butterfly bandages that pull the skin tightly together. Scientists are continually experimenting with new designs. They've added medicines to prevent scars and make blood clot faster. Newer bandages stick better and stay on longer. Scientists are now testing a bumpy surfaced bandage material inspired by the sticky-footed gecko. It is biodegradable and can even stick to wet surfaces.

In 2003, bandage companies began selling a product that may revolutionize the industry . . . liquid bandages. The liquid is flexible and clear and forms a waterproof seal over the cuts. It holds skin together a bit like glue holds paper together, but below its surface the wounds are healing. Kids won't have to peel off their bandages to show their friends their gory injuries or get kisses from mom. 🤖

Ages: 3-6

Trudy Tott Tattletale

By: Sandie Lee

Trudy Tott is a tattletale.

Trudy tries to remind herself not to be a tattletale, but sometimes it just tumbles out.

Once Mom asked, “Who gobbled all the lemon tarts?”

“Pop did,” Trudy blurted. That tattle tumbled out.

Pop asked, “Where’s my favorite t-shirt?”

Trudy piped up, “Mom’s using it as a dust rag.” Another tattle tumbled out.

Trudy’s big sister, Liza, loves to talk on the telephone. Except when Jeremy calls, then she groans and says, “That boy is so boring. All he ever talks about is his skateboard.”

When Jeremy called, Trudy told that tattle, too.

One evening Mom and Pop Tott were going out for dinner.

“We’ll be back before nine,” Mom said. “Keep an eye on Trudy and don’t talk on the telephone all night,” she reminded Liza.

They had just left when the telephone rang. It was Tyler. Liza thought he was cute. She snatched up the phone and narrowed her eyes at her sister. “Go away, Trudy-Tott-Tattletale,” she ordered.

But instead of leaving, Trudy yelled, “Liza burps big when she drinks soda pop.”

Liza hung up the phone quickly and glared.

“Oops. That just tumbled out,” Trudy apologized.

Just then the phone jingled again. This time it was Chloe.

Trudy hollered, “Chloe, Liza told Jeremy that you kiss his picture.”

Liza lost her temper.

“You little twerp,” she shouted.

“Oops. I didn’t mean to,” Trudy tried to explain. “It just tumbled out.”

Liza made a *grrrr* sound and lunged forward. Trudy ran and hid in her favorite spot—the closet.



Moments later the closet door squeaked opened. It was Mom.

“Trudy Tott,” she said. “Liza is in tears. Have you been tattling again?”

Trudy slowly nodded.

“But Mom,” she blurted. “Liza didn’t talk on the phone much and she only tried to grab me when I was tattling.”

Trudy then realized what she had said and hung her head. “Oops. I guess I shouldn’t have let all those tattles tumble out,” she said in a small voice.

She continued on, still looking at the floor. “I’m sorry, Mommy, and I’m really sorry I made Liza cry.”

Trudy popped out of the closet with purpose. “From now on,” she said, matter-of-factly, “instead of being Trudy-Tott-Tattletale, I’m going to be Trudy-Tott-Tongue-Tied. Then no more tattles will ever be able to tumble out of me again.”

~The End~

Take Me Out to the Ballgame

By: Kelly Polark

Make the word “ball” turn into “game” by changing one letter at a time! Use each hint to write the word that is only one letter different than the word above it. Can you knock this one out of the park? Play ball!

BALL

A room divider _ _ _ _

A legal document _ _ _ _

A factory _ _ _ _

5,280 feet _ _ _ _

A boy or man _ _ _ _

Fur around the neck _ _ _ _

Not crazy _ _ _ _

Alike _ _ _ _

GAME

Answers on Pg. 23

Two Heads are Better than One

By: Valerie Bendt

The twins waved as the minivan pulled out of Grandpa's driveway. "Bye, Mom. Bye, Dad. Have a great trip!"

"Bring your suitcases and put them in the spare bedroom," said Grandpa. "I'll be in the kitchen baking cookies for the neighborhood Halloween party tonight."

"We can't wait to show you our costumes," said Aaron.

"We'll go put them on right now!" said Alex.

"I'm off to the kitchen!" said Grandpa as he headed down the hallway.

"Hey, where's the duffle bag with the costumes?" asked Aaron.

"Oh, no! I bet we left it in the minivan," said Alex. "Let's go tell Grandpa."

The twins dropped their suitcases in the spare bedroom and raced to the kitchen.

"Grandpa, we left our costumes in the minivan," said Alex.

Aaron slumped. "What are we going to do now?"

Grandpa wrinkled his forehead. "There's a trunk full of old costumes in the attic. Go see what you can find."

The boys dashed toward the hallway and bounded up the attic stairs.

"This trunk is gigantic!" said Aaron.

The twins heaved open the dusty lid. "Phew," said Alex. "These costumes smell like old sweaters."

Aaron held his nose. "That's the mothballs."

Alex pulled out a black cape and swung it over his shoulders. It dragged on the attic floorboards. Aaron plunked a knight's helmet on his head and almost toppled over.

"Wow! A huge fuzzy bear costume," said Alex.

"And here's a striped tiger suit," said Aaron. "But it's too big. Everything's too big."

Alex sighed. "Now we don't have anything to wear to the Halloween party."

"There's got to be something," said Aaron. "Let's keep looking."

The boys rummaged through the trunk.

"Hey, look! A cool dragon costume," said Alex. He stepped into the crinkly suit and zipped it up. "Wow! It's big enough for both of us."

Aaron and Alex stared at each other. "Are you thinking what I'm thinking?" asked Aaron.



"I sure am," said Alex. "But look. The mask is all crumpled."

Aaron shrugged his shoulders. "That's okay. We can make paper masks like we made in art class."

The boys leaped down the stairs and ran to the kitchen. "Grandpa, can you help us make dragon masks?" asked Alex.

"Sure," said Grandpa. "Did you each find a dragon costume?"

Aaron winked at Alex. "Not exactly, but we've got a great idea."

"We want to surprise you, Grandpa," said Alex.

"Okay," said Grandpa, "I can wait."

Grandpa gave the boys some construction paper, glue, and colored markers. They decorated their masks with horns, scales, and fiery mouths.

"Now we're going to get dressed for the party," said Aaron. "We'll be right back, Grandpa."

"No peeking," said Alex.

Grandpa was taking a pan of cookies out of the oven when he heard, "Roarrrr!"

He turned and said, "Oh my! It's a dragon – a two-headed, red-headed dragon!"

"We told you we had a great idea!" shouted the twins.

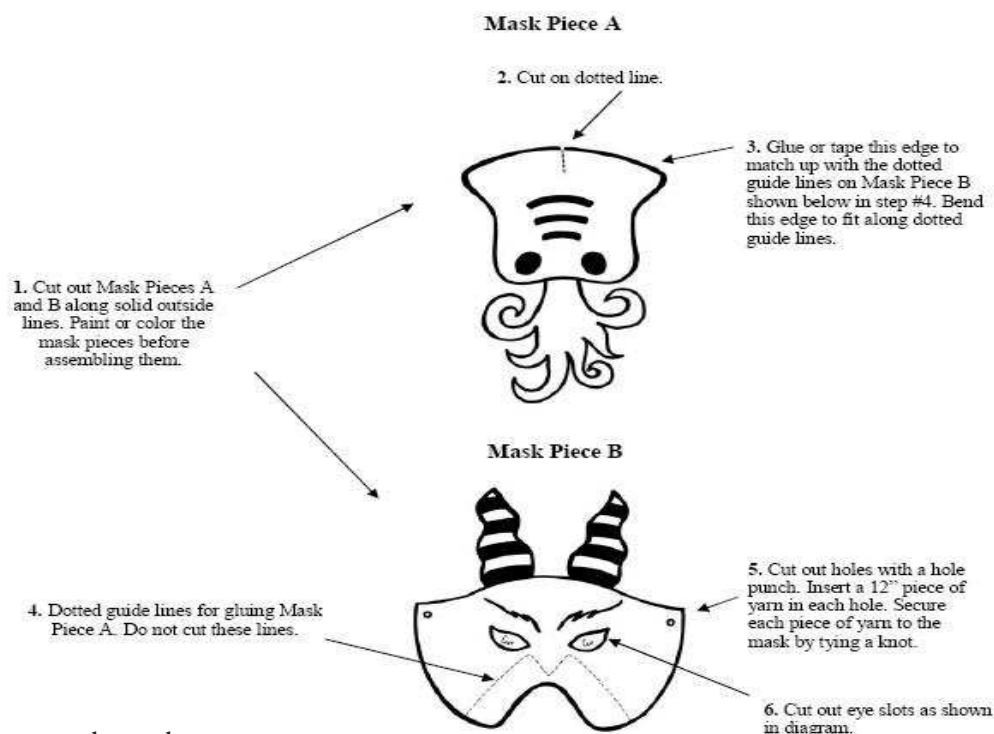
"You sure did," said Grandpa. "You put your heads together and came up with a terrific idea!"

~The End~

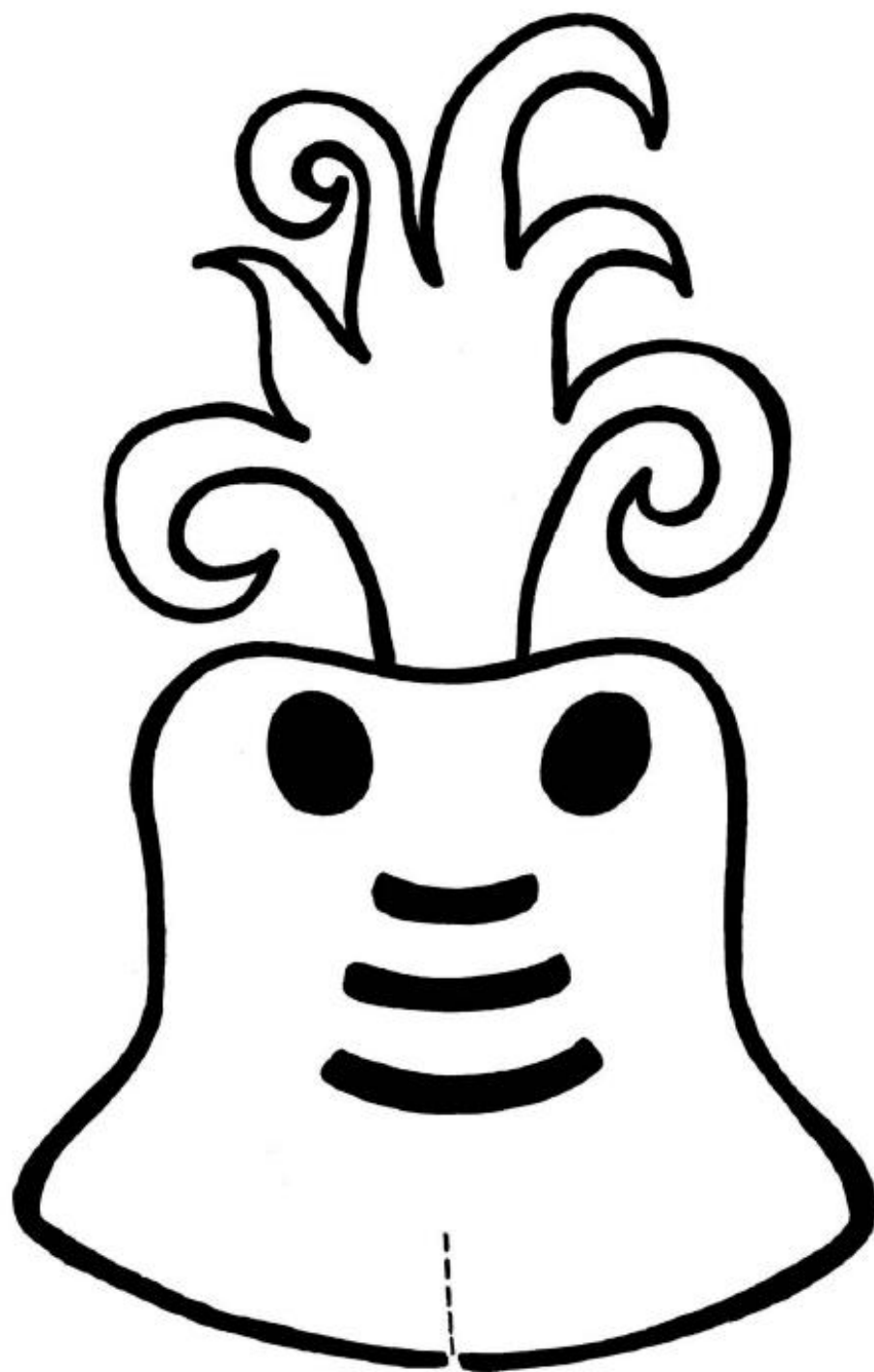
Make a dragon mask of your own so you and a friend can be a two headed dragon for Halloween. Follow the instructions below.

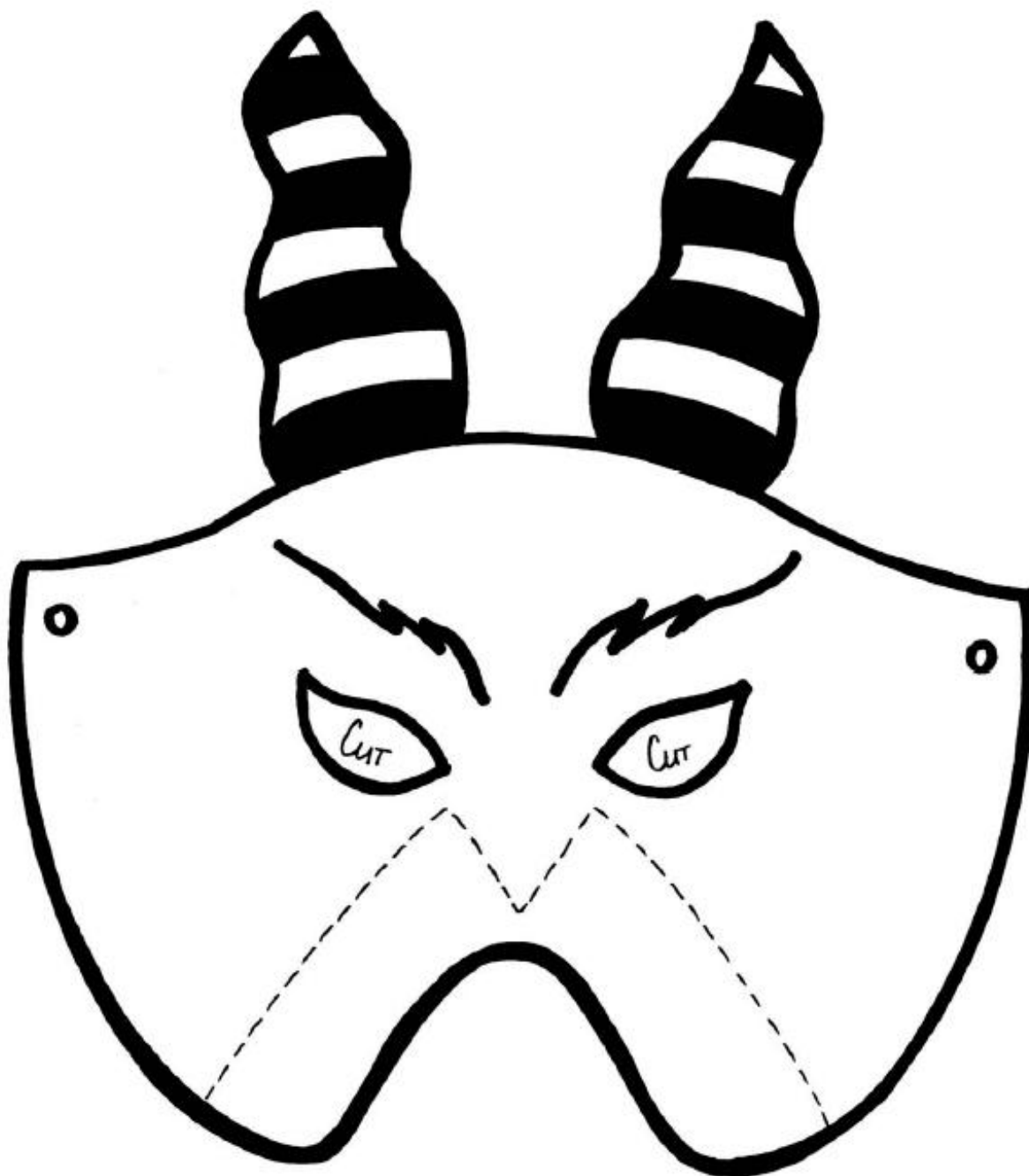
Directions for Making Dragon Mask

By: Valerie Bendt



Note– dragon mask templates are on pages 16 and 17.





Acro-BATS: Flight without Feathers

By: Liana Mahoney

Have you ever been on an airplane? If so, you've probably noticed the airplane's wings. They allow the plane to lift off the ground and fly. Birds, the world's most famous fliers, have wings that are covered with feathers. But did you know that some animals without feathers can fly, too?

Bats are flying mammals. If you are lucky enough to see bats flying, you may notice that bats look like flying acrobats, flipping and turning somersaults in the air. But how are they able to put on this acrobatic show? Bats don't have feathers or wings like birds do. Instead, bats use their hands, their fingers, and their skin to fly!

Hold your hand in front of you and spread your fingers apart. Gently pinch that little flap of skin between your spread fingers. This little flap of skin, called a membrane, allows human beings to open and close their fingers without tearing their skin. Bats have membranes between their fingers, like human beings do, but they have more membranes. This is how bats are able to spread their fingers really far apart.

Imagine that your fingers grew and grew until they were the length of most of your body, from your neck to your ankles. Imagine, too, that the membrane between your fingers was thicker, spreading all the way to your fingertips and attached to the sides of your legs, all the way down to your ankles. This is what bats' hands are like. Bats' hands are their wings!

The bones in bats' wings are like the spokes in an umbrella. When you open an umbrella, the spokes stretch out and form a shape for the attached cloth covering. Bats open their wings in much the same way. When a bat stretches out its arms and fingers, the membranes stretch too, creating a "wing." This wing's surface area catches currents of air.

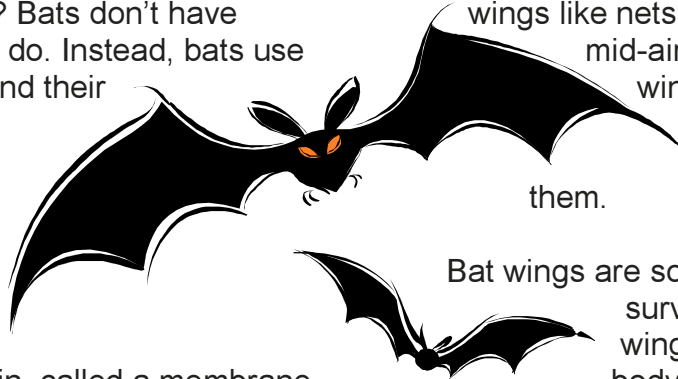
When the bat flaps its wings quickly, the air currents give the bat lift.

When you think about it, bat wings aren't really wings at all. They're really just specially designed hands. With their winged hands and flexible fingers, bats can change direction in mid-air much faster than birds can.

Bats use their winged hands to catch food while they fly. Some types of bats use their wings like nets to catch insects in mid-air. They also use their wings or their feet to flip insects up to their mouths and devour them.

Bat wings are so important to their survival that they groom their wings. A gland in the bat's body gives off special oil that the bat rubs on its wings to keep its skin smooth and protected, like hand lotion.

It's clear that the world's best fliers don't necessarily have to have feathers. A flying squirrel uses a stretchy membrane of skin to glide from tree to tree in the forest. And a flying fish uses its enlarged fins to glide over the surface of the ocean. But while these animals' bodies are designed well for gliding, no other featherless animal has mastered flying quite like the bat has. It's a true acro-bat! 🦇





Meet the Wumblers TV Show Creator Laura Wellington



You cannot get any more real than Laura Wellington. Her story of survival and how she turned her family's devastating misfortune into an experience of

inspiration and motivation for all to follow is amazing. Laura is a successful entrepreneur. She owns a financial and technology company in Fort Lee, New Jersey and has also added television series creator to her resume. While her husband was dying of cancer, Laura turned beloved drawings from her teenage years into a hit television show that can be seen worldwide since September of 2007 on Trinity Broadcasting Network, Smile of A Child, The Australian Christian Channel, and Sky Angel's KTV Block. Laura used her artistic talents as a way of escaping her everyday sadness which led to an all out crusade to give back and make this world a better place. What Laura didn't realize is the impact her actions would have on others. Laura looked at what was missing in children's television and decided to give moms what they wanted: family friendly television that really teaches core values such as responsibility, friendship, respect, and acceptance that differences unite rather than divide and we are all special in our own way. Her multi-colored, multi-cultured characters bring educational lessons to families through entertaining story lines and upbeat songs.

When did you first come up with the idea of The Wumblers?

I came up with the original idea and characters when I was fifteen years old. Drawing them became a hobby of mine.

How did you create your characters?

Quite frankly, I don't know. I woke up one morning and the characters were in my head. From there, they

naturally developed through the stories I wrote and the drawings I rendered.

What inspired you to take your illustrations of The Wumblers and write a TV show for children?

I wanted to help make the world a better, more hopeful place for children to live and grow. After seeing the pain and suffering my own children were enduring at the loss of their father and so many other children were enduring through the loss of their own loved ones during the tragedy of 911, the need to begin making positive changes to this world became even more apparent than before. Television became my method of change, as even the youngest of children watch television. The earlier change begins, the better the opportunity for permanent change.

What types of art do you like to draw?

Fun art—art that makes people smile and even laugh.

How long does it take you to illustrate a Wumblers' show?

Each Wumblers' show takes about two weeks to fully create, including writing and illustrating.

Can you tell us a funny story about making The Wumblers' TV show?

One of the actors we hired performs six voices within the series. I asked this actor if he ever becomes confused, as there are moments when two of his characters must speak with each other, leaving him to feel as if he was talking to himself (which, in an essence, he is). Admittedly, he does.

If you could live in any book or children's TV show, which one would you choose and why?

Without a doubt, I'd live in The Wumblers (or Wumbleton as we call the town), as it is a fun, interesting, warm, safe, and enjoyable place to grow up. And I could be as different as I was meant to be and still feel valued and loved.

What are some of your favorite books to read?

When I was a child, all Dr. Seuss books. Also *Where The Wild Things Are*. As an adult, I read just about everything.

If you had to pick a children's character that is most like you in personality, which would you choose?

Belle in Disney's *Beauty and the Beast*.

Did you always want to be an artist?

I think you are born an artist whether or not you want to be an artist in your profession. I actually wanted to be a doctor when I was young.

What do you do when you're not working on The Wumblers TV show?

I spend time with my children, bake, enjoy time at the ocean, read, go to the movies...regular activities like everybody else.

What TV stations can I find The Wumblers on?

You can find The Wumblers on Trinity Broadcasting Network on Saturday mornings. Beginning in October we will also be airing on a Spanish language children's network. If you check our web site we will be posting the network, times etc.

Are there plans for DVDs for those who don't get The Wumblers in their hometowns?

DVDs are currently available on www.tystoybox.com along with our other merchandise like toys, games, plush, t-shirts, and CDs.

Where can we purchase Wumblers' merchandise, if any?

Currently the easiest way to purchase Wumblers' merchandise is through one of our online retailers, Ty's Toybox at www.tystoybox.com.

If you could give one piece of advice to every aspiring artist and writer, what would it be?

Remain passionate about your art. Never give up. And always be yourself. Combining those three elements will give you the best chance at living your artistic dream.

Other Interviews and articles with Laura Wellington:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EaAF-XpoAao>

http://www.multi-taskingwoman.com/Meet_The_Gals_Bio.aspx?id=78

<http://www.hispanicmpr.com/2008/07/30/watch-video-cartoon-series-designed-to-promote-bilingualism-becoming-popular/>

http://www.wtnh.com/Global/story.asp?S=8752710&nav=menu29_2_23 At 04:55 PM 3/

Wumblers' Merchandise:



Full Moon

By: Billy Burgess

The glowing full moon was barely visible through the tree branches. A raw smell of resin, wood, and sap filled the air. Tonight was the perfect night for Mary to scare her best friend, Jared. She had him believing that their teacher, Mr. Griffin, was a werewolf.

"It's a full moon...and if the rumors are true, we shouldn't be out in these woods," Jared said.

The wind picked up, swaying the bare tree branches. The orange and red leaves on the old dirt road lifted up into the cold night breeze.

Mary pointed her finger. "Don't you dare chicken out! We're going to prove that Mr. Griffin is not a werewolf."

As they walked, the clouds covered the moon, exposing only a little light. The wind gave off a screeching sound, and an owl hooted from above.

Mary could see the goose bumps on Jared's arms.

"Don't be scared, there's nothing in the woods that can hurt you," she said with a wicked grin.

Mr. Griffin's house was three stories high and looked over a hundred years old. The paint was peeling and the attic window was busted.

"Maybe... we should turn back," said Jared.

"You're not too scared! Are you?" Mary asked.

"No....I'm not scared," he lied.

Mary walked right behind him with a great big smile on her freckled face.

After all these years, she was finally going to get back at him for all the pranks he had pulled on her. She couldn't wait to see the expression on his face. She could barely keep herself from laughing.

Jared hesitated just before he pushed the doorbell. When he rang the doorbell for the second time, the door flew open. A woman, wearing a blue robe and pink curlers in her hair, answered the door.

"May I help you?" she asked.

Jared stood still, completely speechless.

"Yes, I was wondering if I could speak to Mr. Griffin. I have some questions to ask him about my homework," Mary said.

"I'm sorry, but my husband isn't here. He's away for the weekend on a hunting trip. He won't be back until Sunday. You will have to come back another time," said Mrs. Griffin.

"It's alright. I will ask him on Sunday when he gets back."

Mrs. Griffin waved goodbye, then she shut the door.

Jared shivered when he heard an eerie howl coming from the woods.

"What was that?" he asked.



“Let’s go through the woods and find out. I know a short cut home,” Mary suggested.

She led Jared into the dark woods. The wind had calmed down, and the only noise was the crackling of the fallen leaves as they walked.

Mary knew this was the perfect time to play her prank on Jared. She glanced back and smiled at him. She continued walking, then she took the vampire fangs from her pants pocket and placed them in her mouth. She halted and waited until Jared was close behind her. Then Mary turned around to face him.

Jared gave a horrifying scream and she watched him run out of the woods as fast as he could.

Mary took the vampire fangs out of her mouth and yelled after him, “Why are you running?”

She hadn’t had time enough to open her mouth to show her vampire fangs before he ran off.

Mary turned around to take the short cut home, but there was something blocking her path. She stared at the werewolf in horror.

The rumors were true! Mr. Griffin was a werewolf!

~The End~

Take Me Out to the Ballgame Answers

BALL

A room divider	(WALL)
A legal document	(WILL)
A factory	(MILL)
5,280 feet	(MILE)
A boy or man	(MALE)
Fur around the neck	(MANE)
Not crazy	(SANE)
Alike	(SAME)

GAME

Taking Turns

By: Jacqueline Jules

Last night I stood watching
as colors spread across the sky.
Once again, the sun was setting.
Once again, I wondered why.

They say the earth is spinning
every second, round and round.
Why don’t I feel it moving
when I’m standing on the ground?



They say when evening comes
and I brush my teeth for bed,
children way across the globe
are waking up instead.

Could that be the reason
we lose the sun each night?
The world is taking turns.
I think that's quite polite.

Don't Break Your Mother's Back!

By: Gayle Jacobson-Huset

Corey kept stepping on the cracks of the sidewalk.

"Oh no, not again, Corey," said Abigail to her cousin. "I just told you stepping on cracks would break your mommy's back. I don't want anything to happen to Aunt Julie."

"I'm sorry," mumbled Corey. "The cracks are right where I step. I sure hope Mommy's back is okay."

"Let's head home and find out," said Abigail. "C'mon, I'll race you."

Abigail took off running for her aunt's house at the end of the block.

"Abbey Girl," whined Corey, "wait for me, Abbey Girl."

THUMP!

"Waaah," wailed Corey. "I'm hurt. Abbey Girl, *help!*"

Abigail stopped and looked behind her. Her little cousin had fallen down.

"I'll get your mommy, Corey. I'll be right back."

Abigail pumped her legs as fast as they could go. Without knocking, she burst through the door of Aunt Julie's kitchen.

"Quick, Aunt Julie. Corey fell on the sidewalk and is hurt."



Aunt Julie dropped the potato peeler and ran after Abigail. When they reached Corey, he was gulping down big sobs and crying, "I want my mommy! I want my mommy!"

"It's okay, Corey, I'm here," said Aunt Julie. She bent down, scooped Corey into her arms, and cuddled him close.

Aunt Julie looked Corey over. "No broken bones, Corey, just a few scrapes. You'll be fine. How did you fall?"

Afraid she'd be blamed for Corey's fall, Abigail blurted out, "The sidewalk tripped him, Aunt Julie. It was mad Corey was stepping on its cracks. It was my idea to race Corey home to see if your back was really broken." Abigail sobbed.

"Oh, I see," said Aunt Julie, holding in a giggle. "It's all right, Abigail, you did nothing wrong. As you can both see, my back is just great."

"Phew," said Abigail.

"Hooray," said Corey.

"It's time for lunch," said Aunt Julie. "Abigail, would you like to join us?"

"Yes. Thank you, Aunt Julie," said Abigail.

Abigail reached for Aunt Julie's hand. "Let's go, I'm starved!"

Abigail skipped all the way, making sure *not* to step on any sidewalk cracks – just in case.

~The End~

Ruth Wakefield's Cookie

(The Toll House Cookie Story)

By: Carla Mooney

Ages: 7-9

Did you know that the first chocolate chip cookie was made by mistake? Yes, that's right! Ruth Wakefield's cookies didn't turn out the way she wanted. Lucky for you and me, Ruth's mistake became a delicious chocolate chip cookie.

In 1930, Ruth Wakefield and her husband, Kenneth, bought an old house near Whitman, Massachusetts. More than 200 years earlier, this house had been a "toll" house. People traveling on the road back then stopped at the toll house to pay tolls, change horses, rest, and eat. Ruth and her husband decided to turn their house into an inn, just as it had been long ago. They named it the Toll House Inn. Ruth cooked and baked for the inn's guests. Her desserts were especially delicious. People from all over New England would stop at the Toll House Inn to eat Ruth's desserts.

One day in 1937, Ruth was baking for her guests. She didn't have any of the baker's chocolate she usually put into her cookie batter. Looking around the kitchen, Ruth grabbed a bar of semi-sweet chocolate that Andrew Nestlé had given her. To save time, Ruth decided not to melt the chocolate. She cut the bar into tiny pieces and stirred it into her dough. Ruth thought the chocolate would melt in the oven. But it didn't! Instead of

making chocolate cookies, the tiny chocolate bits grew soft and gooey. The chocolate chip cookie was born.

Ruth's guests at the inn loved her new cookie. Soon everyone was talking about Ruth's dessert. The local newspapers wrote about the cookie and printed Ruth's recipe. People all over New England started buying Nestlé's Semi-Sweet Chocolate bars to make their own chocolate chip cookies.



The Nestlé Company noticed the huge increase in sales of their chocolate bars. Nestlé and Ruth met and agreed to print Ruth's recipe on the chocolate's package. They decided to name Ruth's cookie the "Toll House Cookie" after the inn where she invented it. Nestlé also agreed to give Ruth as much chocolate as she needed for the rest of her life, so that she could keep on baking her delicious cookies.

Seventy-one years later, Ruth's mistake has become one of the most popular cookies of all time. Grab a glass of milk and enjoy! 🍪

Roman Farming

By: Aniket Shah, 5th grader

September was a very busy time on a Roman farm. The layer of volcanic soil was so thin that the locals were only able to harvest two crops before moving onto a new field. Rome has a large mountain terrain just like Greece.

Romans mostly farmed olives and grapes. These were very important in ancient Rome, so they could make olive oil and wine. Romans also farmed wheat which would ripen in the hot Italian sun.

When the olives were harvested, they would beat them off the trees, put the olives in a press to squeeze the oil out, and slaves squeezed the oil into jars. After that they were carried to huge ports on the Mediterranean coast and exported by sea all over the empire.

The Romans made wine by tipping the grapes into a big stone trough. Then they would tread on them to squash out the juice. They also used sticks to stop them from slipping on the mushy skins. Finally, the grape skins were put onto a press to squeeze out the remaining juice. This juice was put into big jars where it would sit over a long time turning it into wine.

The Romans ate very little food each day because they had to store all their food for the winter.

In a Roman meal, the first course was a dish called stuffed and cooed dormice, which was stuffed olives and prunes, and peacocks eggs with a sauce. The main course would have been all sorts of boiled and roasted meat. The meat was sliced by the slaves because the guests did not have any knives or forks. They ate everything with their hands.

It was the Etruscans who introduced olives and grapes to the Romans. They taught them how to use the soil better and a lot about agriculture. The Romans imported a lot of their crops from other countries to feed the empire and after the Romans conquered Egypt they had more room to farm. Mostly slaves from conquered countries worked at the farms.

The Romans were able to import a lot of wheat from Egypt for all the Romans to eat. But farming failed to feed all the Romans because there were too many Romans and not enough farmers to work the lands.

The Roman's used many ways to farm and they learned all these skills from the Etruscans and those they conquered. 🤖



Insects Word Search

By: Tanja Cilia

Hidden in the grid below are the names of 30 insects. Catch them before they fly or crawl away by searching in eight directions!

R	T	Q	B	M	T	W	D	D	G	C	M	P	P	T
E	X	E	G	U	E	E	R	I	O	U	R	B	C	G
P	Y	W	K	E	T	I	R	C	H	A	B	E	A	N
P	Y	L	V	C	B	T	K	M	Y	P	S	E	D	I
O	G	I	F	Y	A	R	E	I	I	N	A	T	D	W
H	L	I	D	N	O	J	N	R	I	T	C	L	I	E
S	W	A	W	A	O	G	W	K	F	I	E	E	S	C
S	L	A	C	R	M	G	C	O	C	L	A	Y	F	A
A	A	H	S	A	A	I	A	A	L	E	Y	B	L	L
R	N	I	N	P	T	E	D	R	L	L	E	M	Y	T
G	T	T	J	S	Y	A	I	F	D	E	E	A	E	E
G	I	S	I	L	V	E	R	F	I	S	H	Y	G	N
S	Y	L	F	L	E	S	M	A	D	H	G	F	D	R
M	O	T	H	C	R	I	C	K	E	T	Q	L	I	O
N	A	M	T	A	O	B	R	E	T	A	W	Y	M	H

ANT
APHID
BEE
BEETLE
BUG
BUTTERFLY
CADDIS FLY
CICADA
COCKROACH
CRICKET

DAMSELFLY
DRAGONFLY
EARWIG
FLEA
FLY
GRASSHOPPER
HORNET
LACEWING
LADYBIRD
MAYFLY

MIDGE
MOTH
PRAYING MANTIS
SILVERFISH
STICK INSECT
TERMITE
WASP
WATER BOATMAN
WEEVIL
YELLOW JACKET

Pumpkin Party

By: Allynn Riggs

Janelle's hand trembled as she rang the bell. The largest house in the neighborhood had stood empty for the last three years until the county had refinished the interior last summer. A large sign in the yard shouted to all passersby that it was now a shelter for homeless families. Rumors about the people who lived there were the hot topic at school. Janelle didn't believe the rumors because the new girl in class had announced that she lived at the shelter, and Janelle liked her.

The door swung open, revealing a brown haired woman.

Janelle took a deep breath to calm her voice. "Hi, my name is Janelle and I came to see Karla Winaker."

"Nice to meet you, Janelle. I'm Mrs. Brandon and these are my boys." Two identical boys peeked around the woman's blue skirt as she announced, "Karla! You have a visitor!"

One of the boys pointed at the wagon behind Janelle. "Are those pumpkins?"

"Yep, I brought some to make jack-o-lanterns."

Mrs. Brandon smiled. "Come into the kitchen. I'll get some newspaper." She held the door open while Janelle pulled the wagon into the entry.

Karla arrived, red hair flying in all directions. "Janelle! What are you doing here?"

"Two reasons. First, after what happened at school today, I . . . I . . . well, not everyone is like that. Those kids shouldn't talk that way without getting their facts straight. My mom's a TV reporter and she always says to 'get the fact before you act.' And these are the second reason I'm here." She pointed at the wagon. "I have some extras and I thought you could help me carve 'em. I brought everything except a knife to cut the tops."

As they passed the living room Janelle peeked in. The

furniture appeared well used but clean. She began to relax; rumors were just rumors.

Another girl skipped into the kitchen. "Hi! I'm Katie."

"My little sister," said Karla. She spread the newspapers across the table.

Janelle asked Mrs. Brandon, "Can the boys carve, too?"

Shrieks of delight greeted her nod. She cut lids on each pumpkin then handed out large spoons and left the children to dig out the seeds.

"Why'd you bring so many?" Karla asked as she scooped pulp.

"I have to get rid of all the pumpkins I grew this year. Last year I sold the extras and made almost thirty dollars! This year everyone else on the street had the same idea. I've got too many and there're more hiding under the leaves."

"How're you going to do that? Halloween is Saturday!" Karla stared at Janelle.

"I know. We've already frozen a bunch for pies, but there's got to be other uses for pumpkins besides jack-o-lanterns and pie." Janelle stopped scraping and grinned. "At least you and the kids here can celebrate Halloween with the rest of the neighborhood."

"What's going on in here?" A rich, deep voice interrupted the children's chatter. A sandy-haired man entered the kitchen.

"Daddy!" Katie jumped into the man's arms.

"Who's your friend, Karla?" Mr. Winaker set Katie down and looked straight at Janelle. She smiled in return.

"This is Janelle Turner. She's in my class." Karla waved her hands at the table. "Look what she brought—pumpkins to carve!"

"I see." He pulled up a chair. "What are you going to do with the seeds?"

"Throw most of 'em away," Janelle said. She scraped the last of the pulp onto the newspaper. "I'll probably save some for planting next year."

"There're lots of things you can do with pumpkins, Janelle. You can toast the seeds for one. I'm a pretty good cook so I'll show you how and by the time you're done carving we'll have a snack." Mr. Winaker gathered up the pile of seeds and took them to the sink, humming.

Two hours later Janelle bounced into her home shouting with glee.

"Mom! I solved the pumpkin problem."

"You did?" Mom sounded skeptical.

"We're going to have a Pumpkin Party at the shelter to thank the neighborhood for letting it stay here. Karla's making posters inviting everyone."

Mom frowned. "The shelter? Why'd you go there?"

Janelle planted her hands on her hips. "Before you start, Mom, I got some facts before I acted, just

like you always say. Remember I told you about my new friend, Karla? Well, she lives there with her

parents and sister. It's the only place they can afford right now. Two other families are there, too. There're all different reasons for them staying there."

Mrs. Turner sat down. "Why don't you tell me more about Karla and the shelter."

The Saturday after Halloween, Janelle and Karla finished piling 32 pumpkins of various sizes on the shelter's porch as neighbors began arriving. Cheers greeted Janelle's mother when she arrived with a crew from her TV station.

Janelle introduced everyone. "Mom, this is Mr. Winaker, Karla's dad. He knows lots of ways to fix pumpkin." Mr. Winaker took Mrs. Turner's hand in a firm handshake.

"Nice to meet you, Mrs. Turner." His blue eyes twinkled as he smiled. "Call me Simon. Thank you for coming and letting Janelle help." He waved the cameraman into the shelter toward the kitchen. "With all this help we can have a real pumpkin party. Let's get cookin'!"

Several evenings later, the shelter's living room was packed as everyone previewed a video of the special news segment. "Good does come from individual acts. I'd like to thank my daughter Janelle for reminding me that one person can change things. She got some facts before she acted and has introduced us to the real folks that use and need shelters like this one. Many of us in the surrounding neighborhood were reluctant to support the shelter because we didn't understand who actually benefited from the services provided. It has taken a backyard full of pumpkins and the friendship of children to open our adult eyes and minds. Thank you, Janelle. This is Shayna Turner reporting from the Pumpkin Party at The Walnut Hills Family Shelter."

Janelle's mother removed the tape from the TV. "This will be shown tomorrow on both newscasts. The station manager will have a hotline available for taking donations and answering questions. I want to thank everyone for allowing me to do this story."



Mr. Winaker stood up. "I'd like to thank Janelle as well. You reminded me that I really do enjoy cooking; so much that I've got a couple of job interviews this next week with two restaurants and a catering company. With a bit of luck, I'll have a job soon and we'll move out of the shelter."

Karla placed a small box in Janelle's hands. "And I thank you for believing in me and not any rumors, and most importantly for being a real friend."

Janelle opened the box and pulled out a painted clay pumpkin on a length of black ribbon. "Thank you," She slipped the ribbon over her head. "By the way, I did save some of the seeds so I hope you stay in the neighborhood so you can help me plant pumpkins next year."

~The End~

Seasoned Pumpkin Seeds

By: Allynn Riggs

What You Need:

- 2 c. pumpkin seeds
- 1 1/2 tsp Worcestershire sauce
- 1 1/2 Tbsp olive oil
- 1/2 tsp seasoning salt

Instructions as easy as 1-2-3:

1. Preheat oven to 250 degrees.
2. Clean the seeds in cool water, removing extra pulp or strings.
3. Pat seeds dry with paper towels.
4. In a bowl combine all ingredients until seeds are well coated.
5. Spread evenly on large shallow baking sheet or jelly roll pan.
6. Bake for approximately 1 hour, stirring occasionally until seeds are golden brown.
7. Remove from oven and cool.
8. Store seasoned seeds in air tight container.

Pumpkin Nutrition

By: Allynn Riggs

Ever wonder what else a pumpkin is good for, besides jack-o-lanterns or pies? Check out the list below for some reasons to add this bright orange globe and its nutritional power to your diet.

*Trouble seeing the details of the video game or your newest DVD or music video? Try some baked pumpkin slices drizzled with seasoned butter. Vitamins K and E and minerals such as magnesium and iron can also be found in abundance—all good for your eyes, skin, blood, heart, and bones.

*Need strong bones and a healthy heart to play all kinds of sports? Snack on a handful of toasted pumpkin seeds. The partnership between Vitamin A (one cup of pumpkin contains over 300 percent of the Recommended Daily Amounts) and beta-carotene promotes good circulation and heart health.

*Worried about getting old and wrinkled? Grab a piece of pumpkin pie. Pumpkin is high in alpha-carotene, important in slowing certain effects of aging. The Vitamins A and E also help keep your skin smooth and energize your immune system.

*Does your Mom harp about eating stuff that's low in calories and fat but also high in vitamins and minerals? Think orange – think pumpkin!

So packed with goodness it's listed as one of the fourteen "Super Foods" by Dr. Steven Pratt in his best-selling book, *SuperFoods Rx: Fourteen Foods That Will Change Your Life* (William Morrow, 2004). This large squash, (yes, it's a vegetable) is versatile and tasty to boot. You can puree it to make pies, of course, as well as cakes, cookies, bread, and even soup. You can bake slices or chunks—just add pieces to stew for a nutritious and colorful meal.

So the next time you sneak a piece of pie, you can always say it's not "really" dessert because it's good for you!

Don't Run, Don't Hide

Ages: 7-9

By: Lyn Sirota

Imagine waking up in the middle of the night to a screaming smoke alarm! Your bedroom is filled with black smoke. You can hardly see your hands in front of your face. You cough with every breath. Where's Mom? Where's Dad?



Through thick smoke you see something. It's big. It's dark. And it's crawling toward you. Is it a striped monster? No. You want to run, but it's in your bedroom doorway. That's when you tell yourself, "Hide, quick!"

That would be a mistake. Why? Because that monster crawling on the floor is a firefighter. A firefighter who may have only one minute to save your life.

Why only a minute? Firefighters have air tanks to help them breathe, but you don't. They have no time to spare.

So **DON'T RUN AND DON'T HIDE**. Instead yell, "I'M OVER HERE." Then do exactly what they say.

If you don't see a firefighter or grown-up right away, here's what to do:

*Put your face and body near the ground.
Crawl to the closest door and get out fast.
Don't go back inside.
Meet your family in a place you've planned together.*

What is it that makes firefighters look scary? One thing is their air masks. The mask connects to an air tank that holds up to thirty minutes of fresh air. Have you ever smelled campfire or fireplace smoke? If you have, you'll know it hurts your eyes, nose, and throat making it hard to breathe.

Imagine your house filled with smoke. Firefighters would never be able to rescue you without that scary-looking mask.

Why do firefighters wear big, bulky clothes with stripes? The heavy-duty fire pants that firefighters wear fit over regular clothing. Firefighters also wear special gloves and jackets over their clothes to protect them from fire-heat and smoke. Helmets protect their heads, and hoods protect their hair, ears, and neck from burning.

You might wonder how firefighters find people in dark, smoky rooms. In many fire trucks, there's a tool called a thermal imaging camera. This camera finds people trapped in fires by the heat their bodies give off. It works like a video camera showing pictures in black and white. A black picture is something cool in the room and a white picture is something hot. These cameras help firefighters see where they need to go first to save people. Because the cameras find people by heat, they also help firefighters find the fire if it's hidden in a wall or roof. Then the fire can be put out faster.

To save people, firefighters use tools like hoses, axes, and crowbars to break down walls and open doors. Suspenders keep their pants up, so they don't have to fight fires in their underwear!

So when a firefighter finds you, **DON'T EVER RUN OR HIDE**. Tell them, "Keep your pants up, I'm right over here!" 🚒

Previously published in Wee Ones and Broomstix magazine.

Hocus Pocus

By: Bonnie MacKay

In the shop window, a rainbow of silk handkerchiefs flowed down a black velvet volcano. White gloves holding a wand floated in midair, and the display floor was littered with playing cards.

"Looks pretty cool! Are you sure you don't want me to come in with you?" Matt's dad asked him.

"Nope," Matt insisted. "I don't want you in on any of the tricks when I do my magic show."

Matt stepped through the door, and the ancient shopkeeper greeted him with an offer to help. With gnarled fingers, he skillfully demonstrated trick decks of cards. He presented bright metal rings that locked together and separated at the flick of a wrist and a magic wand that drooped and straightened at his command.

"How's this g-rabbit you?" the man asked, his bushy gray eyebrows wiggling. "A genuine antique magic hat."

"Genuine magic, huh?" Matt said. The tall top hat was well worn, its black satin dulled and frayed by time. He could easily picture a magician from another era with this hat. He set it carefully on his spiked hair. A perfect fit. Even if it wasn't magic it was the perfect finishing touch for the show. "I'll take it," he said.

Eager to try out his new purchases when he got home, Matt went straight to his room. For his first trick, he balled up a red silk handkerchief and hid it in his sleeve, ready to make it appear to fly out of his new hat. Waving his hand over the hat, he said the magic words, "Hocus Pocus."

A pair of long, furry white ears appeared, sticking out of the hat. Matt's eyes grew wide and he jumped back.

It was a real magic hat after all! He did a little dance, grinning giddily. The old man was telling the truth.

Imagine what he could do. This was going to be the best magic show ever. He'd be a world famous magician in no time!

"Hocus Pocus," he said again, willing the rabbit to return to the hat. He was more than a little surprised to see a second rabbit appear.

Maybe it's a different magic word, he thought. "Abracadabra!" he exclaimed. Nothing happened. "Allakazam!" Still nothing. "I guess only Hocus Pocus works, then," he said.

Matt was distressed to see a third rabbit appear in the hat at his words. Now he had three rabbits and didn't know how to get them back into the hat. He chewed his lip. Sure, the hat would make for great magic shows, but what if it just kept creating rabbits?

Matt's dad knocked on his door. Matt poked his head out.

"How's the Hocus Pocus going? Are you getting the hang of your new stuff?" his dad asked.

Matt startled when his dad said the magic words, but he answered quickly, "Great, Dad. Just practicing some tricks now."

Matt closed the door, deciding to check on the hat just in case. He was dismayed to find a fourth rabbit looking at him expectantly. Good thing rabbits can be litter trained, he thought. He put a "Do Not Disturb" sign on his door and headed to the store to get carrots and lettuce, hoping to think of a solution to the rabbit problem.

To prevent any further rabbit accidents, he wore the hat for safekeeping.

"Hey, Hocus Pocus!" someone called out to him at the store.

Matt wilted a little when he felt a warm furry weight on his head beneath the hat, squashing down the blond tipped spikes of hair. This was getting out of hand. There was no way he'd be



able to keep hiding five rabbits in his room, and there seemed to be no end of magic rabbits in sight.

He'd have to return the hat. There was no other option. So much for the world famous magician, he thought. He kicked at a pebble on the sidewalk.

He packed up the hat and the rabbits in a box and headed back to the magic shop.

"I need to return this hat," he began.

"What's the matter with it? Some-bunny break it?" the shopkeeper said.

Matt's eyes narrowed. "You knew about this," he accused.

"Knew what? Don't go hopping to conclusions!"

"The rabbits. You had to know!"

"Oh, that. It is a bit of a hare-y dilemma, isn't it?" The shopkeeper sighed. "Fine, I'll take it back. And the rabbits, too."

Matt shoved the box at him with a glare.

Suddenly the shopkeeper's eyes twinkled with mischief. "Actually, I just got something in today that I think you'd 'dove,' if you'd like to exchange

the hat . . ." With a flourish, he produced an elegant, but well-worn magician's cape.

Matt watched in alarm as a white feather floated down from the cape. Then he laughed. At least doves would fly away!

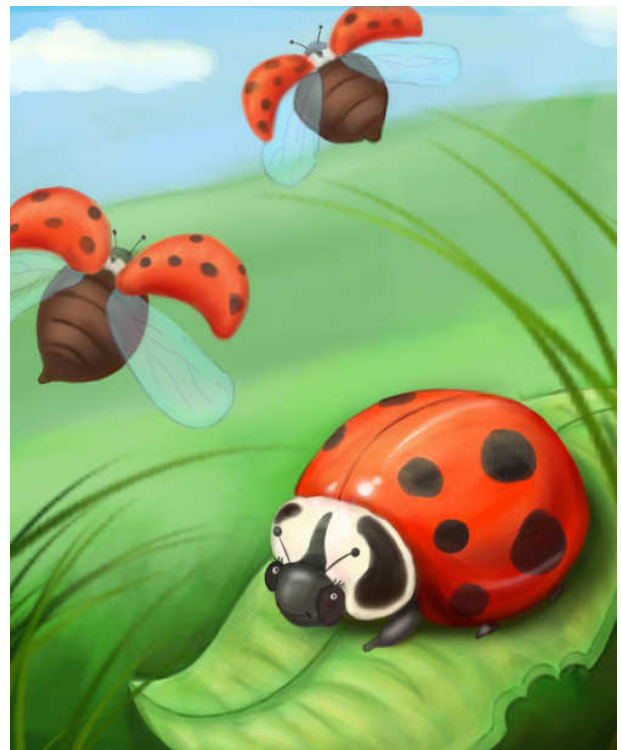
~The End~

Miss Ladybug

By: Sarvinder Naberhaus

"Hello" Miss Ladybug
red on a leaf
I spy black dots
staring back at me.

Winking 1, 2, 3,
they wave "goodbye"
flying high on wings
for a ladybug ride.



Drawings on the Earth

By: Donna Marie West

Have you ever drawn in the sand or the soil, only to see your creation washed away by the waves or the rain? People long ago drew on the earth, too, and some of their works have survived to this very day!

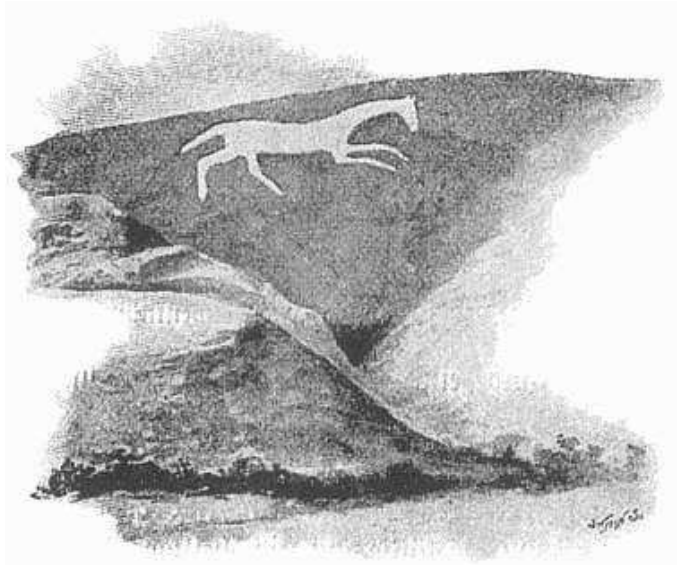
Drawings in the sand or soil are called *geoglyphs*. The most famous geoglyphs are in England, Chile, and Peru, but there are some amazing ones right here in the United States.

One type of geoglyph is known as an *effigy mound*. These are made by building up earth in the desired form (usually an animal or other recognizable figure). There are hundreds of effigy mounds in Iowa, Wisconsin, and Alabama, but the largest in the world is the Serpent Mound in Adams County, Ohio. This form of an uncoiling snake is over 1,300 feet long, three feet high, and up to 20 feet wide. It was discovered by surveyors in 1846.

Many archaeologists believe it was made by the Adena Indians over 2,000 years ago, yet its purpose is unknown. The mouth of the serpent points toward sunset at the summer solstice on June 21, so it may be connected to celestial events. A number of caves found under the figure and burial mounds nearby suggest it may have been used in sacred burial rites.



Many geoglyphs are made by scraping away dark pebbles on the surface of the earth to uncover the lighter colored soil below. These are sometimes called *intaglios*. The Colorado River flood plain is home to more than 200 of these figures.



The Blythe Intaglios are located in the desert about 15 miles north of Blythe, California. They were discovered in 1931 when a local pilot flew over them. They may be anywhere from 450 to 2,000 years old.

Six figures in three groups include a coiled snake, three human figures with outstretched arms (one in each group), and a creature that looks like a cat. The largest figure is 176 feet long from head to toe.

Mohave and Quechan legends say that the human figures represent Mastamho, the little brother of the Great Spirit. It was Mastamho who created the animals, insects, and birds, and gave man the names for all things. The cat figure may represent one of Mastamho's helpers, the lion of the underworld, Hatakulya.

Just north of Quartzsite, Arizona is the Bouse Fisherman. This is a human figure spearing fish in the water. Legend says that it is also an image of Mastamho, this time as he created the Colorado River.



been damaged and even destroyed by weather, hunters, farmers, visitors, and vehicles. Fortunately, the most well-known geoglyphs are now recognized as historic landmarks.

The Serpent Mound is located in the first U.S. state park and may be viewed from a pathway or an observation tower from March to November.

The Colorado River Intaglios and the Bighorn Medicine Wheel are open to the public, but they are protected by fences now, so that you and your children (and maybe their children) will be able to enjoy them for many years to come. 🐞

Archaeologists believe that the Colorado River intaglios were used by Native Americans for religious rituals and ceremonial dances.

A third kind of geoglyph is made by placing stones in a pattern (often a circle). There are many stone circles, known as *medicine wheels*, in the U.S., mainly in South Dakota, Wyoming, and Montana. They were used for sacred rituals and ceremonial dances. Some of them may have been used as calendars, with spokes pointing to certain stars at certain times of the year.

The best known medicine wheel is located above the tree line in the Big Horn Mountains of Wyoming. It is 80 feet in diameter and was formed by placing hundreds of limestone rocks in the shape of a wheel, with 28 spokes running from the center to the rim. It is 500 to 800 years old and is still used for spiritual ceremonies by many Native American tribes, including Cheyenne, Lakota, and Crow.

But just like your own drawings, these breathtaking links to cultures of the past will not last forever. Some of them have

Ladybug Puzzle



- Can you spy something red?
- Can you spy something green?
- Can you spy something black?
- What is winking?
- Can you count the dots?
- Wave goodbye to Miss ladybug!



Answers on Pg. 41

Jed & Randy

By: Kathleen E. Fearing

Jed stared at his open math book. There was a lot more than homework on his mind. He had just been voted captain of his baseball team.

"You know what, Dad? I'm going to play pro baseball when I grow up."

"That's great, Jed. Right now you have to concentrate on your homework."

"I'm going to be better than Hank Aaron, or even Sammy Sosa."

"First things first, young man. Do your homework or no baseball after supper."

"Aw, Dad."

"I mean it. Get your homework done, then you can dream all you want."

"It's not a dream, Dad. I'm going to do it."

Jed finished his homework and then practically flew to the baseball field. His friend Randy was up at bat.

"Hey, Randy, you're holding the bat way too high," Jed yelled. "I showed you how to hold it. Stop making the same mistake, man."

"Quit picking on me, Jed. I hit the ball okay."

Jed sighed. "You're making the same mistake, Randy. You're holding the bat all wrong."

Randy thumped home plate hard with his bat. "What's it to you?" he yelled. "I hit the ball most of the time, don't I?"

"Look," Jed snarled. "Mistakes are for losers. You don't want to lose the playoffs, do you?"

"Just because I don't do things your way doesn't make me a loser, Jed." Randy threw his bat into the dirt and went home.

Jed complained to his dad. "I don't get Randy. He keeps holding the bat wrong. I've told him a hundred times not to make the same mistake."

"Randy's your best friend, Jed, you shouldn't pick on him. And I've seen him hit homeruns, just like you."

"Yeah, sure, but he could do better. I keep telling him, mistakes are for losers."

His dad frowned. "Don't be so hard on Randy. You could lose your best friend."



"Naw." Jed laughed. "He knows I'm just trying to help him."

The next day at practice Jed yelled at Randy again.

This time Randy snapped. "That's it, Jed. I'm not going to play on your team. All you do is yell at me."

"Aw, come on, Randy."

"Sorry, Jed, but if I make so many mistakes you can win the playoffs without me."

Randy sounded angry, but he looked really hurt as he turned and went home. That night Jed phoned Randy, but he refused to talk.

“Dad, what am I going to do?” Jed threw his baseball hard into his mitt.

His dad looked up from his paper. “Do you really believe Randy is a loser, Jed?”

“No way, he’s a good hitter. I just want to win the playoffs. And if Randy’s swing was a little better there’s no way we could lose.”

“Why don’t you tell him that?”

“He sounded pretty angry, Dad. He didn’t want to talk to me when I called.”

“Try again. He might have changed his mind.”

Jed called again. This time Randy answered the phone.

“Hey, man, look,” Jed pleaded. “I’m sorry about yelling and stuff. But you’ve got to come back. The team needs you. The playoffs are in two weeks.”

“Is that why you want me back, Jed? So you can win the playoffs? Because if that’s all you want, forget it.” Randy slammed down the phone.

That night Jed couldn’t sleep. He kept hearing Randy say, *If that’s all you want, forget it.*

Jed was baffled. Didn’t all the guys want to win the playoffs? So what the heck was eating Randy?

The next day at school Randy steered clear of Jed. He didn’t sit with him at lunch. He walked away when Jed tried to talk to him. And he didn’t sit with him on the bus ride home.

The playoffs were getting closer, but Jed wasn’t thinking about them any more. He just wanted his friend back. He decided to call Randy one more time.

The phone rang. Randy answered.

“Randy, it’s Jed.”

“What do you want?”

“Hey, don’t hang up,” Jed pleaded. “I just wanted to say . . .”

“What did you want to say?” Randy’s words were sharp.

Jed tried to swallow, but his mouth felt like dry oatmeal. “Hey . . . if you don’t want to play in the playoffs, it’s okay, Randy. I just don’t want to lose you as a friend.”

Randy didn’t answer. Jed was almost in tears.

Then Randy said, “I’ll be in the playoffs, Jed, as long as you quit yelling at me so much.”

Jed’s face lit up. “I won’t yell, Randy. I promise. But if you don’t want to play, I understand, really. I just want us to be friends.”

“What if I make a mistake? Does that make me a loser?”

“Hey, Randy, I think if we weren’t friends anymore I’d be the loser.”

“Yeah,” Randy said, “so would I.”

~The End~

Tempting Fate

By: Gilda A. Herrera

The sudden Texas storm brought torrential rain.

The four of us sixth-graders dropped our bats and balls. We ran for the nearest cover—the overhang from the equipment building. Lightning hinted of danger.

“Rain is spooky,” Sally Sue said.

“Rain’s not spooky,” Billy said. “But lots of other things are.”

“Things like what?” Scratchy asked in his squeaky voice.

Billy pointed to the bus stop corner. “Could be struck by lightning on that corner. Heard that burns you up so bad your body turns totally black, crunchy like. Your fingers and arms drop right off you.”

I shivered.

“Could be worse than that,” Scratchy said. “Like standing at that bus stop corner and having a plane fall on you. Your body would break up in a million pieces.”

“Worse than that would be standing at that bus stop corner and being stolen, you know, grabbed by some mean, ugly men,” Sally Sue said. “Then thrown into a car and taken away and . . . and . . .” Sally Sue scared herself so much she couldn’t go on.

I shifted uneasily. None of us could take our eyes off that bus stop corner.

“What do you think is the worst that could happen, Jake?” Scratchy asked.

I stared hard at the bus stop corner. I didn’t like this game. It reminded me of that short story we had read in class. The one about tempting fate. But I didn’t want to lose face.

“Worst thing that could happen is standing on that bus stop corner and having the ground open up and

swallow you,” I said. “You’d be stuck in the dark with no air, then suffocate. You’d never see your folks or friends ever again.”

My scary words quieted all of us.

That night when the phone rang, I knew it would be bad news.

It was Billy calling, totally freaked out.

“Jake!” he yelled. “Sally Sue is missing. It’s on the television news. Her mom is crying something awful. The reporter says she was abducted.”

“Do you think it happened at that bus stop corner?”

“I don’t know,” I said as fear gripped my heart.

“Maybe I’ll go check it out like they do on CSI on TV,” Billy said.

The next day, both Sally Sue and Billy were not in school. A feeling of dread came over me.

“You think Sally Sue was abducted by some mean guys?” Scratchy said after school. We stood looking at the bus stop corner, but well away from it.

“Where’s Billy? You think he was hit by lightning?”

I made a decision. “Let’s go ask Billy’s mom.”

His mom answered the door looking frazzled. “Billy was burnt,” she said. “He can’t play.” She slammed the door on us.

“Burnt?” Scratchy said. “By lightning? At that bus stop corner?”

An image of Billy’s black arms and fingers crumbling to the ground formed in my head.



The school bell rang and we scrambled to our feet.

And so it went.

Sally Sue was there too. She had been taken, then returned, by her divorced father. She kept laughing, telling everyone what a great time she'd had.

Scratchy was there, too. He'd only had the wind knocked out of him.

My fears had come from my imagination. Well, that and believing stories. I never got swallowed up by the earth. 'Course, I never went to that bus stop corner again either. I figured it made no sense to tempt fate.

~The End~

In the morning I went alone to the bus stop corner. Something was happening. A crowd had gathered. There was a small body on the ground.

I gasped. It was Scratchy. He wasn't moving. My heart seemed to stop when I saw a small model airplane sitting on his chest.

A teenaged cyclist was crying to a policeman and the paramedic. "I'm so sorry. I lost control of my bike. That model plane flew out of nowhere."

I moved away. Fearful thoughts revolved in my head. Every terrible thing we had said was coming true. Sally Sue, then Billy, now Scratchy. Was I soon to be swallowed into the earth?

With my back to the equipment shed wall, I slowly slid to the ground..

If only tempting fate could be turned around. If only my friends could be okay.

Tears rolled out of my eyes.

"Hey, Jake, what's wrong?"

I looked up. It was Billy. I was so glad to see him.

"Nothing," I said, noticing his bandage. "What happened to your arm?"

"Mom spilled some scalding water on it by accident," he said, sitting. "It's okay. She felt really bad about it."

Halloween Magic

By: MaryJo Shannon



I made a jack-o'-lantern –
A jolly one was he
With two big eyes and two big teeth
A-grinning back at me!

I lost my jack-o'-lantern,
But I'm not sad, not I!
I lost my jack-o'-lantern, but –
I made a pumpkin pie!

Scared Stiff

By: Virginia C. Ferguson

A goat is eating when a grasshopper jumps out in front of him. His eyes pop open, his legs go stiff, and he drops like a rock. But he won't miss a beat because he will probably continue chewing his lunch while waiting for the stiffness to go away. He's a fainting goat.



Fainting goats don't really faint. They remain alert and fully awake when they fall over. The breed was given the name because of a

muscle disorder called **myotonia congenita** (my-o-ton-e-ya con-gen-e-ta). Other names you might hear are myotonic goats, wooden-leg goats, nervous goats, stiff-leg goats, Tennessee fainting goats, and scare goats.

Myotonia congenita is present in the kids (babies) at birth. In some cases, a kid will faint as soon as it's born. By adulthood though, fainting goats have usually learned to balance themselves. A person might notice stiffness when the goats walk—er, wobble around. The muscle disorder is painless, and an attack usually only lasts between 10 to 20 seconds.

The muscle condition causes the goats to be heavier muscled than other types of goat. Their bulging muscles make them good for meat rather than milk. But most breeders wouldn't dare harm their beloved goats. They're raised and sold mainly as pets.

Fainting goats make good pets because they can't climb very well. They don't jump fences, chew tin cans, or eat garbage either. They're easy to care for, and they're not at risk for many diseases that plague other goat breeds. On the other hand, they are more in danger from predators.

If startled by a predator, a fainting goat may become so stiff that he can't keep from falling over, leaving him open to attack. For this reason, owners keep guard or herd dogs to watch over them in the field.

Fainting goat breeders are proud of their animals. Some of them boast that they can trace their fainting goat's family tree back seven or eight generations. Wow! Most humans can't even do that.

Yvonne and Dennis Key, owners in Sweetwater, Tennessee say, "A few breeders are even picky about the color of fainting goats they raise. They will only breed the original colors of black and white."

Whatever their color, genuine fainting goats all have the same condition. If you ever meet one, throw your arms out and yell, "Hellooooo!" See what happens. It doesn't hurt them, and you will probably get a good laugh. It's kind of like scaring your sister and almost as fun—just kidding.



To learn more about these unusual creatures, type "fainting goats" into your favorite search engine.

There are lots of web sites available. Some of the web sites show film of fainting goats doing what they do best—falling on the ground.

If you want to learn how these great animals are being preserved and protected, visit the International Fainting Goat Association's web site at www.faintinggoat.com to learn more. 🐐

Come Play with Me!

By: Darbi Haynes-Lawrence

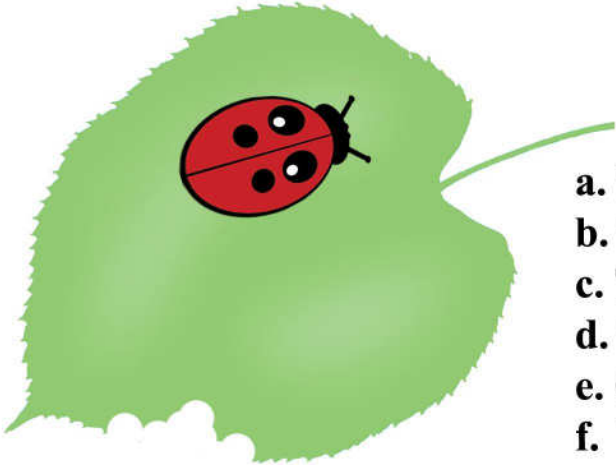
Come on Mama! Come play with me,
We'll swing high, up in the sky!
Swing and sway, all day we play.
Come on Mama, come play with me.

Come on Daddy! Come play with me,
Let's make blocks in the sandbox.
Scoop and play, for the whole day.
Come on Daddy, come play with me.



Come on Papa! Come play with me!
Let's blow bubbles! One, two, three!
Float and blow, on wind they flow.
Come on Papa, come play with me!

Come on Nanny! Come play with me!
Let's have tea with my dollies.
Sit at the table, by Miss Mable.
Come on Nanny, come play with me!



**Ladybug
Puzzle Answers**

- a. The ladybug**
- b. The leaf**
- c. The dots**
- d. The black dots**
- e. One, two, three**
- f. Wave and say "Goodbye"**

A Sister's Determination

By: Judy Doyle

Slowing and silently the room filled with black, poisonous smoke. Clarice and Charles gasped wildly for fresh air. None was available. They were frightened and lost in an apartment they had known most of their lives.

It was almost impossible for either one to speak, but Clarice finally shouted, "Charles, we've got to get out of here. Here, put this cloth over your mouth." She handed her ten-year-old brother a piece of cloth adding, "We're going to crawl along the floor until we find the door."

"Then what?" asked Charles.

"Don't be scared. Follow me. Hear me?" Clarice wasn't used to being a leader. "Stay close. If we can find the fire door by the stairwell, I think we can get out."

"Sis, I'm scared," Charles choked out the words.

"Don't be scared. We're going to get out. Now, let's go." She knew she sounded more confident than she felt.

Carefully the two inched their way to the wall and crawled to the doorway. The smoke hung heavily in the hallway, but not as thick as in the apartment. As they crept down the hallway, Clarice could hear the sirens in the distance.

"Help is on the way, Charles," Clarice shouted.

"I d-d-d-don't th-th-think I can make it," he answered hoarsely.

"You got to. You hear me, Charles? You got to," she shouted. Clarice reached back and pulled Charles closer. When she felt her brother collapse, she pulled him onto her back and carried him. The additional weight slowed down Clarice, but she continued to struggle along the hallway.

Clarice reached the stairway and felt the door with a sigh of relief. It wasn't hot. She carefully opened the door and discovered the smoke wasn't very thick. Clarice still battled to carry her brother on her back. She'd stop every few feet to see if Charles was still breathing. His breathing sounded strained, but he was still alive.

I'm so tired. But I've got to get out of here, thought Clarice. To keep herself focused, Clarice set one flight of stairs as her goal. Once she was down one flight of stairs she would rest briefly and check on her brother. The struggle was almost more that she could bear, but she knew she had to keep going.

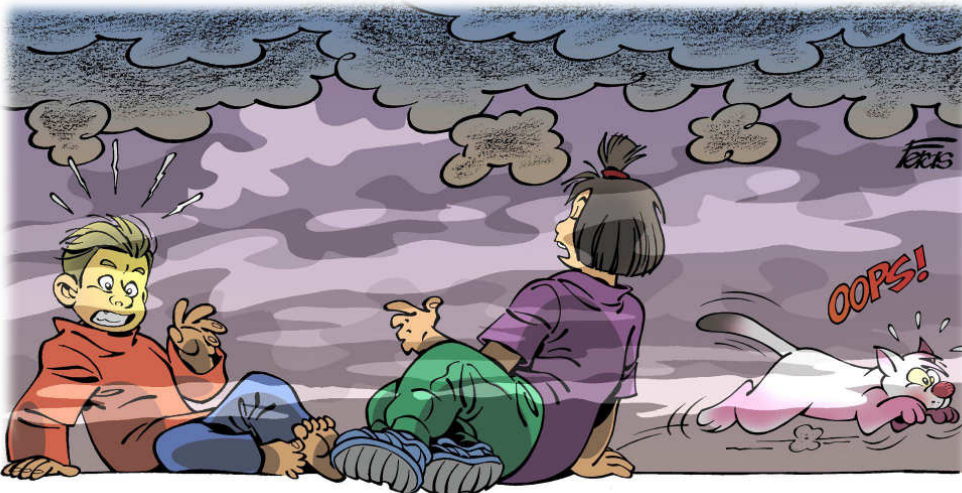
In the distance Clarice could hear voices. "Help," she shouted. "Help me." But her raw throat made her hard to hear. Her shouts went unanswered. "Please, someone help me!" She shouted again

before she collapsed into unconsciousness.

Clarice had no idea how long she and Charles lay in the stairwell, but suddenly she heard voices.

"Remarkable," a deep, deep voice said softly.

"I can't believe she did it," another person said.



“What a brave, young lady,” whispered a woman’s voice.

Gradually Clarice began to regain consciousness. She slowly turned her head and moaned.

“Honey,” she heard her mother say. “I love you. You’re going to be all right.” Clarice felt her mother softly stroking her hair. But try as she might, Clarice couldn’t awaken. “Clarice,” her mother continued. “There’s someone here to see you.”

“Sissy, I’m here. Please get well. I miss you. Sissy, I love you.” It was Charles. Clarice turned her head toward her brother. “Look, Mom. She heard me,” Charles said excitedly.

“Keep talking to her,” his mother encouraged.

“You know. You saved my life. When I gave up, you kept going. You carried me down ten flights of stairs. You’re really my hero. Please wake up, ‘Rice.’”

Clarice slowly moved her lips. “I love you.” Uttering those few words completely drained her.

Early the next morning Clarice heard the door open and asked, “Who’s there?”

“Well. If it isn’t the hero,” Charles said teasingly.

“What are you talkin’ about?” Clarice asked.

“Why, you’re front page news, Sis. Didn’t you know that?”

“Yeah, right. Dumb girl rescued from fire,” she answered, ridiculing herself.

“Nope. Says here, right on the front page, ‘Blind Led Sighted from Fire.’ Sounds like you’re a real hero, Sis. Guess that means you really love me, huh?” Charles joked.

“Yeah, I guess it does. But don’t count on any special favors,” Clarice answered.

Pumpkin Cake

By: Allynn Riggs

What You Need:

- 4 eggs
- ½ cup vegetable oil
- 2 ¼ cups flour
- 2 tsp cinnamon
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 2/3 cup sugar
- 2 cups mashed pumpkin or one 16 oz. can pumpkin
- 2 tsp baking powder
- 1 tsp baking soda



Instructions as easy as 1-2-3:

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
2. Beat eggs, oil, sugar, and pumpkin together.
3. Combine dry ingredients and gradually add to pumpkin mixture.
4. Stir until smooth.
5. Pour into ungreased 10 x 15 baking pan. Bake for 25-30 minutes.
6. Cool before frosting.

Frosting

- 8 oz. cream cheese, softened
- ¼ cup butter, softened
- 1-2 tsp milk
- 2-3 cups powdered sugar
- 1 tsp vanilla flavoring

Instructions as easy as 1-2-3:

1. Beat together cream cheese, sugar, butter, and vanilla until smooth.
2. Add enough milk for desired consistency.
3. Spread over cake and enjoy.

Look Out! That Bug's Loaded

By: Sandie Lee

Toxic vapor cannons, beak-swords and stink-blobs. The newest in video game fun? Perhaps a sci-fi thriller? Not quite. Actually, these are all weapons used by some very unusual insects. But don't be disappointed. Even though they're just bugs, these insects are loaded and ready for action.

READY. AIM. FIRE!

The beetle is cornered by a nasty predator, the frog.

POP POP POP!

Like machine gun fire, the beetle blasts the unsuspecting victim with three shots of toxic vapor. It's a direct hit to the face. The frog leaps about as if in pain. The beetle scurries off to safety.



The bombardier beetle not only is a fast runner, but when it comes to chemical warfare, it's the master. How does it do this?

An organ in the beetle's body has two separate chambers where toxins are made. When the beetle feels threatened, these chemicals come together in a third chamber and heat to boiling. The bombardier beetle has a cannon-like rear end and can aim and fire with precision. The toxins explode out with tiny *POP* or *CRACK* sound. The burning, gaseous cloud is very irritating to the skin and may even leave a blister.

The bombardier beetle lives throughout the United States and southern Canada. The bombardier is a ground dweller and hunts for insects at night. During the day it hides under leaves, logs, and stones.

ON GUARD

The assassin bug creeps along a leaf. It's slow and silent as it stalks its prey. Its six legs, tough gray body, neatly folded wings, and pointed,



wheel-like back ridge all move with purpose. The unsuspecting victim hasn't a clue what is about to happen. Suddenly, the assassin bug lunges forward, grasping the prey with its thick, spiny front legs. With one swift motion it clamps onto the fly and thrusts down the sword. The fly lies motionless.

The wheel bug is one of the largest insects in the assassin bug species. Adults measure 35 millimeters in length. Along with the gear-like ridge along its back, the wheel bug also has two long antennae on a thin, elongated head, where you'll find its secret weapon—the beak-sword. This works like a sharp drinking straw and is concealed against its chest when not in use.

After the wheel bug impales its victim, it injects it with an enzyme-laden saliva. This immobilizes the intended meal, and within 30 seconds the victim's innards have turned to a soupy mush. The assassin now slurps away for about two hours. After the wheel bug finishes, the victim looks the same on the outside, but inside it's completely hollow.

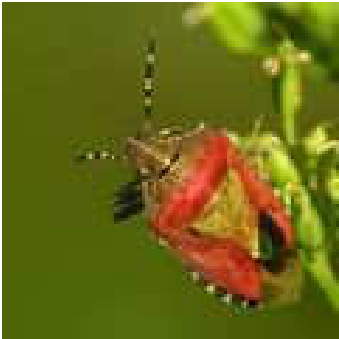
These fascinating bugs live throughout the United States east of the Rocky Mountains and in southeastern Canada.

BOMBS AWAY

Mom senses danger. It's a villainous wasp hovering just overhead. She quickly gathers her 24 nymphs under her triangular body. The wasp approaches.

Mom waves her antennae to scare it off. Not fazed, the wasp flies even closer. Mom uses her tough, shield-like back and buzzes her wings. The wasp ignores her threat and lands just out of reach. Mom kicks out her middle and back legs in another attempt to scare it away.

It works. The determined wasp takes to the air once again, darting back and forth.



One of the nymphs edges out to see what all the commotion is about. The wasp speeds toward it. Mom's ready and silently drops her most powerful secret weapon . . . the stink blob. The wasp

catches a whiff of this noxious smell and zips away in the opposite direction. Lunch will have to wait.

Stink bugs range from 6 to 12 millimeters in size and come in various colors. Most are brown, gray, and green. Some, like the harlequin stink bug, are black with bright yellow or orange markings. All stink bugs have a large triangular structure on their backs. This raised covering points toward their hind end and is called the *scutellum*.

As their name suggests, stink bugs also produce a chemical so noxious and foul that most insects and animals are repelled by it immediately. However, the stink blob is used only as a last resort since it saps most of the bug's energy.

Not all insects are as protective of their young as the parent bug. She will still protect her

young even when they're old enough to be on their own. When the young wander off, they secrete a scent trail. If in trouble, they send out a powerful alarm scent. It's Mom to the rescue as she follows this scent path right to them.

If you want to learn more about these and other weird bugs, visit your local library, the internet, or an insect museum. And remember, the next time you see a bug, don't bug it . . . you never know, it might just be loaded. 🐛

SPIT, GOO, AND HONEY POTS

The frog hopper larva spits to protect itself. This frothy substance known as "cuckoo-spit" comes from the larva blowing air into a liquid that comes from their anus. This protects them from predators as well as keeping them moist.

Some species of termites have exploding soldiers. These dedicated members of the colony will literally burst their guts open to stop an invasion . . . and it works. The sticky, slimy goo covers the enemy, stopping the attack. The only problem is they sacrifice themselves in the process.

Honey pot ants feed on nectar, but in the long, dry season when no nectar is available, they just go to their living storehouses. These special ants, known as *repletes*, are continuously fed by the workers until they're engorged and almost ready to burst. Other ants can then extract the food from them when needed.

Aboriginal tribes in Australia have been known to raid these ant nests in search of the honey pots. They pop these tasty little ants into their mouths for a sweet treat.



Stanley Bookman's Tips

Hi! I'm Stanley Bookman. I come from Storyville. This is the place where all the characters in each story live. Where is Storyville, you ask? It's in the World of Ink, and you can only get there by opening a book.

I've come to live here at Stories for Children Magazine to share tips with you on how to become better readers and have you help me spread the word about special events or holidays, such as . . . Columbus Day!

Columbus Day will be celebrated on October 13, 2008 to commemorate the historic landing of Christopher Columbus in the Americas in 1492. When Columbus came to the Americas, his exploration of the "New World" opened up all sorts of possibilities to Spain and Europe. Of course, Columbus didn't "discover" North America, and the regions he did explore were already inhabited. He only discovered them from the viewpoint of the Europeans. Yet his first voyage did prove one thing for sure, that the earth was not only round, but that it was bigger than he had originally thought.

One of the first known celebrations marking the discovery of the "New World" by Christopher Columbus was in 1792, when a ceremony organized by the Colombian Order was held in New York City honoring Christopher Columbus and the 300th anniversary of his landing in the Bahamas. To mark the 400th anniversary of Columbus' voyage, President Benjamin Harrison made a commemorative proclamation in 1892. But it was Colorado, in 1905, that became the first state to observe a Columbus Day. And in 1937, President Franklin Roosevelt proclaimed every October 12 as Columbus Day. That's where it remained until 1971 when Congress declared it a federal public holiday on the second Monday in October.

Want to find out more about Columbus? Here are some fun links to explore!

[Make your own map of Columbus's voyages and pretend to be a world explorer.](#)

[This Columbus Day, make your very own mini versions of the Nina, Pinta, and the Santa Maria.](#)

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Columbus_Day

<http://www.teachervision.fen.com/columbus-day/teacher-resources/6607.html>

Reading Tip: When your child completes a picture, ask him/her to tell you about it. Often, there's a fascinating and revealing story behind it. Telling you about it will lessen the frustration a child may feel in not being able to portray it as realistically as he/she might like.

Another thing you can do is help your children write their stories. Have them look up words they can't spell in the dictionary. This will help them become better readers and expand their vocabulary. Once the story is on paper you can submit it to Stories for Children Magazine. Seeing their story in print will help build confidence and self esteem.

Stories for Children Magazine wouldn't be here if it wasn't for the hard work and support of our contributors. Each contributor works for free submitting stories, articles, poems, crafts, games, artwork, and so much more. To learn more about the contributors at SFC visit: <http://storiesforchildrenmagazine.org>



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Cynthia Sherwood



Neysa Jensen



Wayne S. Walker



William Lane

The SFC Team would like to wish you a very happy and safe Halloween.

Make sure you watch out for ghost, goblins, witches, black cats, and jack-o-lanterns.



Thank You for Reading Stories for Children Magazine!



See You Next Month!